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THE
Mischief of Impositions:
OR, AN
ANTIDOTE
Against a Late
DISCOURSE,
Partly Preached
At *Guild-Hall Chappel, May 2. 1680.*
C A L L E D,
The Mischief of SEPARATION.

*If your Church had kept to the Primitive Simplicity and
Moderation, the occasions of most Controversies had been taken away.*
Dr. Edw. Stillingfleet's Rational Account, p. 102.

*I will not conceal my mind! In things purely Indifferent, Multiformity
joyn'd with Charity, does no less advance the glory of God than
Uniformity. Dr. Fuller Def. of Ch. History.*

*Sacra Scriptura est lex Ecclesiæ, fidei mensura ; Regula Intellectus ;
Humanæ Ratiocinationis frænum. An.*

The Second Edition.

*L O N D O N : Printed for Benj. Alſop, at the Angel and Bible in
the Poultry, over againſt the Stocks-Market, 1680.*



To the Right Worshipful Sir T. R. Knight.

SIR!

SInce your Command gave occasion to the Conception of this Discourse, justice will oblige you to stand for its *God father*; which you may safely do without danger from the *Canon*. The height of my ambition was to provide my self of a *Right Worshipful Sulceptor*, when Favourites may command the Patronage of the *Right Honourable*: thus every man will answer for a *Great mans Error*, when the *poors mans Truth* may go unchristen'd: for thus the Poet,

*An heaven-born Truth (like poor mens Infants) may
For want of God-fathers, unchristen'd st. y,
e And find no priest; when every stander-by,
Will be a Gossip to a Great mans Lye.*

Among the many discouragements I struggled within answering your *desires* and the *Doctors Sermon*, there was none more terrifying (though many to) than that it was a *Sermon*, and a *Sermon* premunited with the *Lord Mayors Order*. The former; because it seem'd indecent to Arraign a *Discourte*, that came with the Certificate of the *God of Heaven*, and had to Honourably been acquitted by the *Gods on Earth*: To this I had nothing to say in my *Defence*, but that, *He that will plead the priviledg of the sanctuary, must keep within the verge of it*. I have heard of a Gentleman, that being long prosecuted in the *high Commission* for striking a *Reverend Clergy man*, pleaded that *Mr. Parson* was not in his *Canonical Habiliments*, and therefore ought not to insist upon his *character*; and *Archbishop Laud* voted for the poor mans discharge, because it was but *Lay-battery* to cudgel a *Coat*, which would have been *Theomachy* upon a *Cassock*: I must borrow the same *Plea*; That the *Reverend Dr.* ought not to stand upon the priviledg of a *Preacher*, unless he had kept closer to his *Commission*, and preacht *nothing for*, but what *really was the Word of God*: But to be open with you, Sir, It was the latter that put me hardest to it, when I saw the flag of *London* streaming before the *Ship*; for I protest to you, I am always ready to strike sail to the meanest *Yatch* that hangs out the *Colours* of so sacred a *Name*, so great an *Authority*: And yet I rub'd through that, by considering, that the *Order* was for its *Printing*, not against *my Answering*; and though that *License* made it more *vendible*, yet not at all more *unanswerable*; and so I hope we are past the worst, for I never much Dread those *Polemical pieces*, whose greatest strength lies in the *left hand*

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Page before the Title. And yet I was a little stumbled at the *Order*, which desires the Doctor to Print, not only what he had Preached, but what further he had prepared to deliver at that time; which (me thought) lookt somewhat like the Implicit faith required by the *Rubrick*, which enjoyns the Minister to use one of the *Homilies* set forth, or hereafter to be set forth by *Common Authority*.

In the very entrance of his *Epistle Dedicatory*, the Doctor takes notice of a Report raised, it seems, by some ill men (that's the *Alamode* phrase) that he intended to stir up the *Magistrates* and *Judges* to a persecution of *Dissenters*. I was not a little troubled, that a person of his Character should be so unworthily misrepresented, and misinterpreted; and no less joyful, that the Doctor has so timely and zealously disclaimed a design so horrid in it self, so unbecoming the Place he then bore, and the Title he justly wears; nor can I imagine whence a suspicion, as *scandalous as groundless*, could be foster'd, except from this one thing, That his Sermon was preach't to those *Righteous persons*, who (in the matter of *Conformity*) *needed no repentance*, when the *Harangue* had been more pertinent and proper for a *Conventicle*, to those *Sinners* whom he presumes to need it.

But so far was he from blowing up the coals of persecution, that he professes his only design was to prevent all occasion of it, by finding out a certain foundation for a lasting union among our selves. And not without good reason: for seeing there are but two ways to extinguish a raging fire, the one by pouring water upon that merciless Element, the other by withdrawing the jewel that feeds, but never fills its insatiable appetite; the Dr. judg'd it the wiser course to convert all the *Dissenters*, that there might be nothing to burn; rather than leaving such combustible matter to quench the fiery fury of persecution: for if there were no offenders, there would neither be room for *pardoning mercy*, nor *vindictive justice*; and if he could perswade all men to conform upon such easie arguments, the whole Generation, Kind, and Tribe of *Ecclesiastical Informers*, must be extinct, and fail for ever.

However, an union, and a *lasting union*; and a *foundation*, nay a *certain foundation for that lasting union*, are terms of that melodious chime to our ears, that his tendries must needs be highly acceptable, even when their disproportionateness to those ends give us feeble hopes that they will prove effectual.

All *union* that pretends to be *lasting*, must be *real* and *cordial*; and that it may be so, must necessarily be founded upon *terms consistent with the conscientious principles of the united parties*: *force* may possibly justle and thrust men into *one place*, but never into *one mind*; and *fraud* may palliate for a while the threatening *symptoms*, but will never eradicate the *causes of the malady*: such was that *union* between the *Greek* and *Latin Churches*, hastily patcht up in the *Council of Florence*, where his *Holiness*, like an old bungling Botcher, sticht together the two ill matcht pieces, which presently dropt alunder, and

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the rent was made worse. All dough-bak'd Alliances will give again; and those differences which are compromised upon unequal terms, last no longer than a fair juncture shall tempt the aggrieved party to a rupture. So have we sometime seen a mighty Conqueror impose such terms upon the conquered, that they suppose it *one tacit Article* in the Peace, That it shall endure no longer than the injured and weaker side can get power to justify its violation.

This lasting Union (the Doctor thinks) is impossible to be attained, till men are convinced of the evil and danger of the present Separation: but others think (with equal plausibleness) that it is impossible to be attained till men are convinced of the evil and danger of the present Impositions: and the Dr. was once of that mind, when he proved so learnedly, *Iren.* p. 1, 2. That things necessary for the Churches peace must be clearly revealed: Which principle had he and others adhered to, his *Weapon-salve for the Churches wounds* had been as common and famous as the *Sympathetical Powder* which Sir K. Digby assures us is in *France* successfully practised by every Barber. But why is Union impossible but upon such conviction? Is it impossible for the same Power that imposed these severe conditions of Union, to relax and remit them? We use to say, *Eodem modo quo quid Instituitur, destituitur*: There's no more goes to Repeal a Law, than to Enact it: Nay, it's more possible for our *Ecclesiasticks* to wave what they confess *indifferent*, than for the *Laity* to comply with what they judge *sinful*. But if inexorable stiffness has made their *condescension impossible*, who created the impossibility? If Union (as matters now stand) is become *desperate*, who put matters into that *desperate posture*? It's unreasonable that any should create a *necessity of separation*, and then complain of an *impossibility of union*: but 'tis easily observed, that men to conciliate repute to their own humors, call what they have a mind to, *absolutely necessary*; and that to which they bear an aversion, *simply impossible*. The Grandees of the Church knew full well, that the generality of the Nation who seriously attended Religion, had contracted such principles as either condemned the Ceremonious appendages as *sinful* or *unuseful*, and therefore *sinful* because *unuseful*: they knew well also, that these Impositions had lost much of that stock of credit upon which they had formerly set up for themselves, and driven a petty trade among us: They must needs know too, that to perpetuate the *old Conditions*, would be but to perpetuate *old divisions*, and create *new ones*; why then would they venture so precious a lading as *Peace*, in that old worm-eaten bottom, wherein it must certainly miscarry? But if it be impossible to attain Union at cheaper rates with *men*, we must look up to *Him* to whom nothing is *impossible*, who can open their eyes to see the things that belong to our common *peace*; and in the mean time enable us to discharge the things that belong to our *duty*, and bear those evils which shall attend them. What a fine world now must moderate and unconcerned Christians have between these two, some have sworn to *endeavour a Reformation according to the word of God*,

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God, and others seem to have taken a solemn Oath never to come up to that Rule ; and between them both, *Union is impossible.*

Well ! say what we will or can, it's impossible to attain a lasting Union till Dissenters are convinc'd of the evil of their Separation. Pray then convince them of it ! That he will do with a wet finger ; for the present Separation (says the Doctor) is carried on by such principles as not only overthrow the present constitution of our Church, but any other whatsoever. If that be the worst on't, we'll endeavour to carry it on by better Principles that shall overthrow neither ; will that please him ? But what if I should return ; that the present Impositions are supported by such principles as will divide, not only our Church, but any Church whatsoever ? This would be but a Rowland for his Oliver : And I am somewhat confident, that fairer probabilities may be offer'd for this Assertion than the other ; for as to matter of fact, it's most evident, that from the first Infancy of the Gospel-state, when the Church was in its Minority of years, and Adult state of perfection, to this very day, nothing has more disorder'd the outward face of the Church, than the Lordly, Imperious Imposition of dubious matters : Thus the Judaizing Dogmatizers, who would stretch all mens Consciences to their own Law, and compel them to a conformity to the antiquated Law of Moses, began the brawl, and their successors in pride have danced after their measures, to the World's confusion. Nor has any Engine of the Devil more batter'd and shaken the well compacted Walls of God's Jerusalem, than these roaring Ecclesiastical Canons : And if we examine the principles upon which they proceed in exacting these unnecessary and doubtful terms of Union, we shall find them the very Same upon which proud Rome has introduced the whole Lirry of her superstitious Observances, viz. an unaccountable power in those that are the Top, to make them do and say any thing that are at the Bottom ; in which Observances, and upon which Principle, the Christian World never yet united, and it's more than probable never will.

But I intend not to confront, but modestly examine the truth of the Doctor's Assertion, namely, Whether the present Separation be carried on by such principles as not only overthrow the present Constitution of our Church, but of any other whatsoever. And there are two Inquiries I shall make upon this subj^t & c^t : First, Whether the principles by which the separation is carried on, will destroy any other Church ? Which if it be true, and that the Dissenting-Churches are built upon such mouldering foundations, such self-destroying principles, it is next to miracle that they should yet stand, and neither fall with their own weakness, nor the weight of Oppression wherewith they have been surcharged ; that they should be continually batter'd with violence from without, and undermined by policy from beneath, and yet no considerable breach be made in their intrinsick Frame and Constitution ! Now to put this Question out of all question, I will make a reasonable motion, Leave the Dissenters quietly to over-

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overthrow themselves by *their own bad principles*, and so shall the *Church of England* avoid the *odium of Persecution*, which of late has no very good name ; and the Separators as *Felones de se*, shall be condemned to have a stake driven through them, who like the *foolish woman*, pluck down *their own house* upon *their own heads*, *with their own hands*. Give them but respite from outward fury, and commit them to be crumbled to nothing by the inconsistency of their own principles ; and they must lay upon themselves, not the Church, the guilt of their own destruction. The Dissenters have outlived *one twenty years* of vexation ; and if men could be quiet, may outlive twenty more, and in time outgrow all their weaknesses ; so that it may tempt an Impartial Considerer to think their present constitution *immortal*, which no outward assaults, no inward Schisms has been able to dissolve. There are two things usually pleaded for the *souls Immortality* ; *the one*, that it's not compounded of Contraries, such as by intestine jars may dissolve its essence ; *The other*, that it's not obnoxious to external Impression, such as may storm, and break in pieces its powers. And on both those accounts, the Dissenters humbly hope their Congregations may prove *Immortal*, seeing they have not felt utter ruine from *the latter*, and do not much fear a dissolution from *the former*.

Secondly, Let us a little enquire, what truth there may be in the other branch of the Doctors Proposition ; *That the separation is carried on by such principles as will overthrow the present constitution of the Church of England*. I shall not assume the confidence to say, That then its present constitution is none of the best and strongest : but this I may with modesty assert, That the principles upon which the Dissenters proceed, will *pluck down* nothing that *Christ ever builte*, nor *pluck up* any thing that *Christ ever planted* ; and if they should *pluck up* a few weeds which *the envious one* threw over the hedge, whilst men slept, the good corn would thrive the better for such weeding ; if they should *pluck down* a few Imaginations which curiosity has carved, and set up in the *Nitches* on the outside of the Church-wall, the main of the Fabrick would stand more firm, discharg'd of a needless cumber, without prejudice to the foundation : Some few *Traditions*, some few unscriptural *Additions*, some supernumerary *Ceremonies*, or some few *Encroachments* upon Christs Regal and Prophetalical Offices their principles might overthrow : but what are these, all these, to the being, the well-being, the flourishing being of the *Church of England* ? Is it true, that *no Ceremony, no Episcopacy* ? Was ever a Church built upon such *Woolsacks* ? Such discourses as these tempt us to suspect there's nothing *substantial* in that Constitution, which cannot subsist without these *accidents*. Are Ceremonies grown such inseparable Adjuncts, that they cannot *Abesse sine subjecti Interitu* ? We may as well fancy, that to scour off the rust, will destroy the Iron ; or that it's impossible to wash the face, without fleying off the kin : as that a Reformation according to Gods word, will draw along with it the inevitable ruine of that Church which is founded on it, and

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and reformed by it : And if it rest upon any other *Basis*, it needs the principles of none but it self to undo it.

I can allow the Doctor to see much farther into these matters than I ; and yet I cannot be perswaded that I am stark blind ; and with the best eyes I have, or can borrow, cannot yet discern what prejudice it can be to them that worship God in a more spruce, splendid, gentile mode than we do, to suffer us to worship our God in his own, old, *Scripture-fashion* : It cannot be denied, that the Protestant Churches in *France* are really separated from the Papal *Gallican Polity* : It must be acknowledged that their principles carry a direct opposition to those of their Adversaries; that their separation from, and opposition to the National frame is much greater than that of Dissenters from and to the constitution of the Church of *England*; and yet the *Roman Polity* lives, and thrives, and prospers, and no one of all the Popish Kingdoms bears a greater port, or glories more in its exterior splendor and grandeur than that does : Why then cannot *Conformists* secure themselves against the *Dissenters principles*, as well as the *Gallican Church* against those of the *Hugonors*? And why may not Dissenters plead for the same freedom, especially as to the immediate worship of God, and ordering their own particular Societies, since they plead for *less* here than they there enjoy, and yet upon *much stronger arguments*? for the Dissenters at home plead for no power to set up *Classes*, and *Synods*, *Provincial* or *National*, which yet are there indulged them ; and they think they might expect a little more respect, as being of one and the same *Protestant Religion*, and not guilty of any principles which have any *tendency*, as they that own them have *no design*, to overthrow the present constitution of the Church ; so that the Doctors Reasonings are herein so unlike himself, so defective of that evidence and cogency wherewith he attaques the Papal Idolatry, that had I not known his Discourse to have been *Concio ad Magistratum*, I might have suspected it to be nothing but *Ad Populum phalera*.

The principles upon which the present Separation (such a one as it is) is carried on, are such as fear not to appear before any Bar, where Scripture and Reason, not Interest and Prejudice have the Chair ; which though it be not here pertinent to *dispute*, but nakedly to *assert*, leaving their *Justification* to those larger Volumes which are in every mans hand concerned to arrive at satisfaction in these matters ; yet shall I direct the Reader to some few of them :

(1.) That every particular *Church* upon a due ballance of all *circumstances*, has an inherent right to chuse its own *Pastor*, and every particular *Christian* the same power to chuse his own *Church* ; I say not they have a power to *mischiefe*, but a power to *chuse* ; not to chuse any, but one that may best advance their own edification ; at least that no *Pastor* be forced upon a *Church*, no *Church* obtruded on a single *Christian* without their own consent : A principle so highly rational, so clearly scriptural, and of such venerable Antiquity, as ought

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ought not upon some imaginary or pretended evil consequences to be exploded, seeing the contrary principle is clogg'd with *more real*, than this can be with *surmised Inconveniences*: I will thank my friends that will recommend to my choice an able Physician, a faithful Lawyer; but I am sure I love my health, my life, my estate so well, as not to put the Election out of my own hands into theirs, who are not likely to love me better than my self: and if I chuse amiss, the greatest wrong will be my own: Now what Church this principle would overthrow, I am yet ignorant; If indeed such tyranny should prevail in the world, that men must be driven to Heaven like silly sheep to the Market, and this principle shou'd a little cross the humor on't, the Churches of Christ would stand where they do, and I believe carry a clearer Counterpart of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is pretended, that upon this principle men would chuse one Pastor to day, another to morrow, and a third the next; and so turn round till they are giddy, or run themselves out of breath in a wild-goose chase, till they sit down, and rest in Atheism and Irreligion: And is this all? The Apostle commands us to *prove all things*: must we needs therefore never *hold fast that which is good*? We ought upon great deliberation, advice and counsel, chuse our own Pastor; and when we have so chosen, sit down under Gods Ordinance, and wait for his presence in, and blessing upon his own way: And in the purest Primitive times, when the Churches exercised this power most, then were they most firmly united, and Divisions, Schisms and Separations the greatest rarities among them: but suppose the worst on't, That some male-content should now and then desert the Communion of *England* for that of *Rome*; Cruelties will never remedy the evil, or the Remedy would be worse than the disease; and what if some odd *Maggot-pate* should drop out with the Dissenters Congregations? what is all this to the overthrow of the Church? This priviledg may be *abused*, must it therefore not be *used*? *Unsettled heads*, and *unstable hearts* will be wandring; let them go; 'tis a good riddance of them if they be obstinate; but where this humor has destroyed one Church, this rigorous forcing of Pastors upon the people has divided and destroyed hundreds.

The generality of Dissenters in this Nation, at this day, may be reduced to two Heads:

First, Such who having been formerly fixt with, and under their faithful Pastors, by their deliberate choice, after good experience of their Ministerial abilities to teach them the mind and will of God, of their wisdom to advise them in their spiritual cases; of their skill to conduct them through their emergent difficulties, of their meekness, sobriety, heavenly-mindednes, and whatever might recommend to, and inforce upon their consciences their sound Doctrine, do still judg it their unquestionable duty to abide in that Relation, and by no terrors to be driven, by no blandishments to be withdrawn

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drawn from their oversight and guidance, according to the word of God, judging that such withdrawing, such separation would be that *real Schism* which hears so badly in, and is loaded with such guilt by the holy Scriptures.

A second sort is of those who having been sometime hearers at large in their respective Parish-Churches, and coming at last to have more concernment for their souls, and the important busines of another world, and finding that their Parochial Teacher was either so *overlaid* with a numerous throng of people (which he commonly, but unadvisedly calls his Flock and Charge) that he cannot personally take care of the hundredth part of them; or so engaged in *secular affairs*, of more weight to him than his Pastoral Charge, that he has neither heart nor leisure to attend so troublesome an employment; or so *unskilful in the word of Righteousness*, that he cannot tolerably declare the Counsel of God for edification; or so unsound in his judgment, that he's more likely to *poison than feed* his people; or so *debauched in his life*, that he plucks down more in an hour, than he builds up in a year; or such a *Bigot* for humane Inventions and Superstitions, that the naked simplicity of divine Worship, is either *clouded* to render it *useless*, or *clogged* to render it *burden-some*; this person seeks and finds out some other Pastor (qualified as before described) to whose Ministerial conduct under Christ (the only chief shepherd) he commits himself; and there peaceably and patiently continues, notwithstanding the barbarick clamours of Schism & Separation: And all this without more prejudice to the Church he forsakes, than it's an injury to a Tradesman to leave his shop, who has *left it himself*, or has his hands full of *better customers*.

(2.) That it is the duty of every Christian to worship God, not only in purity of the heart, but according to the purity of Gospel-administrations: The true measure of which Purity, is to be taken from its consonancy and harmony with the word of God, which has sufficiently either in *general*, *special*, or *particular*, instructed us in the acceptable service of our God: *Purity of worship* is no such idle and contemptible thing, to be flam'd off with an impertinent story, that we must not separate from a true Church upon *pretence* of greater purity: Nor can I imagine upon what pretence, except that of greater purity, the Church of *England* separated from *Rome*, if it be true what we read in *Rat. Account*, p. 293. That the *Church of Rome* is a true Church; and what he further owns, *Defence against T. G.* p. 785. I allow (says the Doctor) the *Church of Rome* to be a true Church, as holding all the essential points of the Christian faith: and what the Archbishop *Land* confessed to that Lady, who would needs go before to *Rome* alone, because she could not bear a crowd, that *she might be saved in Communion with the Roman Church*: Now if *Rome* be a true Church, if she holds all the essential points of Christianity; If salvation may be attained in that Communion, why was there such a stir about reforming of Accidents, when the *Essentials* were secured? Why such a contest about a little easier way, when the other way was passable? Why all this

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do about a purer Church, when the other is confessed a true Church? These things then will follow in the lump from the Archbishops and Doctors Concessions: 1. That a person, or party, may separate from some true Church, which holds all the essential points of the Christian faith, without the Imputation of a Schismatick. 2. That a person, or party may separate from some Church where salvation is attainable, without peril of the guilt of Schism. 3. That the only reason (that yet appears) to justifie the Church of Englands departure from Rome, is, that it is lawful in some cases to withdraw from the Communion of a true Church; wherein all the essential points of faith are owned, and wherein salvation may be attained, for the sake of greater purity of worship, greater clearness of Doctrine, and greater security of salvation. Is it then lawful for England to separate from Italy for greater purity? It may be lawful for others to separate from England for greater purity: 'Tis readily acknowledged, that the Impurity of the Roman Synagogue is much more, unconceivably more than that of the Church of England; and therefore there was not so great cause to leave the latter, as the former, upon that account; but in aspiring after Conformity to the Institutions of Christ, we are not to consider so much what is behind, as what is before; not so much what we have left, as what we have yet to reach; nor to much the *Terminus aquo*, from what state of Impurity we have emerged; as the *Terminus ad quem*, to what state of purity we would arrive: for if it be true that there is such a state of Purity to be obtained, and such a state of Impurity to be avoided, as will justifie our forsaking of this for that; and such a measure of both these as will not; It must be exactly stated, what is the lowest degree of corruption that will, and what is the highest that will not warrant a separation: The *Dissenters* being judges, there are now at home to excuse their secession; The *Romanists* being judges, there are not now abroad to vindicate the Church of Englands separation; and the former are more confirm'd in their judgment, since the Doctors Epistle Dedicatory to the now B. of London, prefixt to his Defence against T. G. where he openly avows on the behalf of the English Church, that it has reformed those abuses only, which have crept in since the times of the first four general Councils: Now the last of these four first being held at Chalcedon, An. 451. there were such Corruptions crept into the Church before that time, which if imposed upon any as the condition of enjoying the means of their salvation, will justifie a separation; but I shall the less insist upon this, because I am confident the Church of England never gave the Doctor a Commission to declare so much in her name, and I believe will give him as little thanks for his labour.

(3.) That every Christian is obliged (at least necessitate praecepti) to live in the use of all Gods Ordinances and Commandments; and therefore it will follow, 1. That where all Christs Institutions are not to be had, a Christian may peaceably withdraw from that society, and seek them where he can find them:

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Now they say the case is this; That though we ought not to commit *one sin* to enjoy all Christ's Ordinances, yet there are *some* wanting in this Church, which if you would commit *a thousand sins* to purchase, you cannot have them: The preamble to the *Office of Commination*, intimates some such matter; *Brethren, in the Primitive Church there was a godly Discipline, that at the beginning of Lent, such persons as were notorious sinners, were put to open penance and punishment in this world, that their souls might be saved in the day of the Lord; and that others admonished by their example, might be more afraid to offend: Instead whereof, until the said discipline may be restored again (which thing is much to be desired); it is thought good that at this time in your presence should be read the general sentences of God's curse against impenitent sinners.* Now view this paragraph well in its parts. 1. There was *a godly discipline* in the *Primitive times*, if we could have kept it. 2. That this discipline was of unspeakable benefit to the people; *notorious sinners were put to open shame*, others *warned by their censures*, and the end of all was the *salvation of their souls*. 3. That this Ordinance is *not to be found* in the Church at this day; which is a great loss. 4. That it is a thing to be *much desired*; and therefore it cannot but be worth the while to step over *two thresholds* for it: it's worth *a wish* (if *wishing* would do it) with the most ordinary Christian on earth. 5. That there's *something set up instead of it*; but *quo warranto*, we are not informed, nor who has power to *chop and change* any Institution of his, for a new trick, *a Quid pro Quo*, contrived by men. And therefore we may fairly hope, we shall not be condemned for Schismatics for practising what they *desire to practise*; but alas we *can*, and they *cannot*, because *none binders them*. 2. It will follow also, that where the Institutions of Christ may be found, yet if they be fetter'd and chain'd to, or mixed with sinful Conditions, 'tis the same case as if they were not at all to be had; for *we can do nothing, but what we can lawfully do*.

To name no more at present; we cannot have our *Infants baptized* without the *Aerial sign of the Cross*, as a *Medium* whereby it is dedicated to Christ. What then shall we do? Here we may have *a part or two* of worship with innocence, and peace of conscience; but if we will *walk in all Christ's institutions*, we must seek elsewhere: What shall we do then? must we spend our Lord's days in an undecent trotting up and down the Town for one scrap here, a snap there? or shall we sit down under a well fixed order of Worship and Discipline, and joyn with other congregations occasionally in what they have? This is the general course of *Dissenters*, and will deliver us from that argument wherein they so much triumph, *That though we cannot joyn with them in all parts of worship, yet are we bound to it so far as we are perswaded it is lawful so to do*: for we are fully perswaded 'tis our duty to partake of, and communicate in *every Ordinance* of Christ, and therefore stately and fixedly to adhere to that Church, where, to that Pastor by whom they are all administered

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nisted, not neglecting other Congregations, as Providence shall invite, to participate of what they afford, and what without sin we may have.

(4.) That *it is sinful to submit, subscribe assent to dubious and obscure terms of Communion*: How far this principle will be allow'd us, I know not; but this I know, the Reverend Doctor once allow'd himself the benefit of it, when he justified the Separation of the *Church of England* from *Rome*, *Dial* p. 165. *We think* (says he) *the requiring of doubtful things for certain, false for true, new for old, absurd for reasonable, is ground enough for us not to embrace communion with that Church, unless it may be had on better terms.* And we think that this is ground enough for us, as well as himself, not to embrace the communion of this Church, seeing there are imposed upon us *doubtful things for certain, new for old, and we think too, false for true*; I say we think so; and it was but the Doctors [we think] that he opposed to *T. G.* And we think further, that this will vindicate us from those loud, but empty outcries of Schism and Schismatics; for so the Doctor asserts, *Ibid. We have often proved, that the imposing unreasonable conditions of Communion, makes the Church so imposing guilty of the Schism.* I have told the Doctor what we think, I will tell him now why we so think, that *doubtful things are imposed on us for certain, false for true*; and among many others I assign this one instance, That in the *Catechism* of the Church, wherein the *Laity* are concern'd, this Doctrine is contained, That *Infants perform faith and repentance by their sureties*; and such repentance too, whereby they *forsake sin*; and such faith, whereby they *stedfastly believe the promises of God made to them in that Sacrament.*

You see, Sir, how the Importance of the Doctor has drawn us out of our reservedness; Dissenters have been modest to their great prejudice, and had rather dispute the matter upon other Arguments, than those drawn from the sinfulness and unlawfulness of the things required, out of that great veneration they have ever had for the *Church of England*; and yet we hope, that they that call and invite, nay provoke, and force us to this task, will not be so disingenuous to trapan us into the ambush of a penal Statute; it being unworthy of Gentlemen, and persons of Honour, first to be our *Tempters*, and then our *Accusers*.

(5.) That *every Christian is obliged to walk with, and in all the ways of God, so far as they have attained*: so far as they have the knowldg of Gods Will, they are to live up to it; so far as they see their freedom from bondage, they are to stand fast in it; so far as they are advanced towards a perfect reformation, they are to persevere. All retrograde motions are dangerous; for who knows but that the least declension from the ways of God may terminate in Apostacy? Foreseeing Christians therefore will not dare totread back those steps they have taken towards perfection, but rather will be pressing forward to what-foever degree of exactness in this life is attainable: We question whether we ought not to *aspire and edeavour after greater purity*; but it's past all question with

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with us, that we ought not to retreat to greater Impurity ; Dissenters are so far from dividing, that they would be growing up into greater Union : they would walk as they have attained to know, and would know more, that they may walk further ; know clearer, that they may walk holier , and for what they cannot attain by study, prayer, and the due use of all good means, they would humbly wait upon God, till he shall, and that he may reveal even that thing also unto them : But some are so hasty and impatient, that they will neither stay Gods leisure, nor theirs, but drive knowledg into their heads, and their brains out of their heads, with the great Church-beetle.

(6.) Lastly, I have heard some of them own this principle, *That where the Church has no power to command, there it cannot be the peoples duty to obey* ; for power to command, and obligation to obedience being relatives, must be affirmed or denied equally and reciprocally : if then the Church has no power from Christ (and whence she should derive it but from him, I cannot divine) to impose these things in Controversie, it can never be proved their duty to obey in the premises : 'Tis a sad sight to see how Dissenters have been teased with that Text, *Let all things be done decently, and in order* ; but the clamour grows very weak from that Quarter : and now a new Text has been found out, which they hope will kill and slay all before it : *As we have already attained, let's walk by the same rule* ; from which they argue with singular acuteness, we must walk as we have attained, and therefore we must walk as we havenot attained ; if we be otherwise minded we must wait till God reveal it to us ; therefore, though we be otherwise minded, we must act as if like-minded ; and though there be various degrees of light and knowledg ; yet we must come up to an uniformity of practice, as if there were no variety of degrees ; which makes a man a certain creature about six pence better than a horse ; though some think upon that principle he's a shilling worse : but these Doct'ries of the Doctors are collected and raised from the Text, just as our Collectors raise a Tax upon indigent, non-solvent people, who come armed with a Law, and a Constable, to constrain for that which is not to be had, rather than the King should lose his Right ; and certainly never was Text so strained and constrained to pay what it never owed ; never man so Rack't to confess what he never thought ; never was a Pumice-stone so squeez'd for water which it never held ; nor ever a good Caule so miserably put to its shifts, as to press those innocent Texts against their wills, which refuse to come in as *Voluntiers to the service*.

Notwithstanding what has been said, it shall stand for not spoken, if the Doctor can prove his assertion, That the present Separation is carried on by such principles as will overthrow any Church whatever : Thus then he proceeds. *If it be lawful to separate upon pretence of greater purity, where there is an agreement in Doctrine, and the substantial parts of worship : then a bare difference in opinion as to some circumstantial parts in worship, and the best constitution of*

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f *Churches, will be a sufficient ground to break Communion, and set up new Churches.* Now because this *dead weight* always hangs lugging on one side, give me leave to put a Counterpoise on the other side, to make it hang more even: *If it be lawful to impose the Ceremonies upon pretence of decency and order, and to exact submission to them upon pretence of Peace and Union, then may bare will and pleasure be a sufficient reason to raise the severest persecution, to force communion against conscience, or to destroy all the Churchs of Christ on earth for a bare difference in opinion as to some circumstances.*

Let us however with all tenderness examine this way of Reasoning, always protesting, 1. That we will not be cheated with that expression of *pretence of greater Purity*: for we do not allow *hypocrisie* to be a sufficient ground of Separation. 2. Nor with that other expression, *a bare difference in opinion*, which we would explain both here & hereafter, if we understood the meaning of it: These things premised, I observe in his Argument somethings *prudently supposed*, and those supposals as *wisely improved*. First then, here are some things very *prudently supposed*: As (1.) that there is a *confessed agreement* between the differing parties in *Doctrine*: But where shall we find that *system of Doctrine*, in which the *Agreement* is supposed to lye? shall we seek it in the *Holy Scriptures*? In vain! one party can find a *Church-power* there to make *Canons*, in which the other party shall be bound to acquiesce upon pain and peril of the guilt of *Schism*: but the *Dissenting party* can see *no such matter*: Those again have found a *Doctrine* there, that the *Addition* of any thing *in specie* to Gods word or worship, which he has not commanded *in genere*, is *culpable*; but the other party wonder where they pickt up this *ungrateful Doctrine*; shall we then go search for this *supposed or confessed agreement* in the 39 *Articles*? there, or no where, we may expect to meet with it; but here also are we miserably disappointed, for the *Doctor* himself has satisfied us in his *Rational Account*, p. 54. 55. That the *learned Primate of Ireland* (understand not B. *Usher*, but *Bramhall*) tells us the *sense of the 39 Articles* of this *Church*. *Neither doth the Church of England define any of these Questions necessarily to be believed, either necessitate precepti, or Medii—but only bindeth her sons for peace-sake not to oppose them;* And more fully in another place. *We do not suffer any man to reject the 39 Articles of the Church of England at his pleasure; yet neither do we look upon them as essentials of saving faith, or legacies of Christ and his Apostles; but in a mean, as pious opinions, fitted for the preservation of Unity; neither do we oblige any man to believe them, but not to contradict them.* Now if this be true, I would fain learn how the *Doctor* can be so confident that we are agreed in *Doctrine*, when we are at a loss, and wholly to seek in what *Doctrine* to agree?

You are surprized (Sir!) I doubt not, at this discovery: Has not the *Church of England* defined in her 39 *Articles* any thing *necessarily to be believed*? then it seems the *essence and existence of a God* is not defined to be necessary. Are these

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these Articles *no essentials of saving faith*? then it's no essential point of faith to believe, that *Christ is the eternal Son of God*. Are these but *pious Opinions*? then it's a pious Opinion that we are *justified by faith without our own merits*: Is it enough not to contradict them, and that we are not obliged to believe them? then an *Atheist* is agreed in the Article of the *Godhead*, if he has but wit enough to keep a good tongue in his head: And the *Socinian* is agreed in the Article of the *Trinity*; the *Papist* agreed too in the Article against *Transubstantiation*, provided always they can but bite in their sentiments; nay the *Protestants at Rome* are agreed in the *Articles of Trent*, the *Christians in Constantinople* are agreed in the *Alchoran*, for I think they do not believe them, and yet have so much wit as not to contradict them.

Here they torment us with new-coyned Distinctions, of *primary* and *secondary*, *affirmative* and *negative Articles*; some *more refined*, others of an *inferior Alloy*; Well then, let us suppose that the *negative, secondary*, the Articles of the *lower Classis*, are not necessary to be believed in order to salvation; Are we agreed in the *primary, affirmative*, and those of the *highest form*? I doubt not! for granting that the *Dissenters assent to them*, and the *Assenters dissent*; or suppose on the other side, the *Conformists agree to them*, and the *Nonconformists disagree*; 'tis all a case, they are in the same degree of distance from each other: Now the plain truth is this; The *Dissenters* generally agree with *that book* which is commonly called the *39 Articles*, which was compiled above a hundred years ago, and this *book* some men call the *Church of England*; but then they are far from Agreement with the leading *Clergy-men* of this generation (who as near as we can guess do constitute the *Church*): And this is certain, that the *Rulers and Teachers of the Church* do really differ from one another, and therefore *Dissenters* must needs differ from some of them; but which of them is the *Church*, we know not; If both parties, the *Church* must necessarily be of *two Religions*; and so this pretended agreement is not *real and sincere*, but *notional, speculative and imaginary*.

(2.) 'Tis further supposed, that the disagreeing parties are yet *agreed in the substantial parts of worship*: To which I must answier, 1. That we know of no Commission, no Charter granted by Christ to any Church, to institute *any parts of worship at all*, whether *substantial, integral, or circumstantial*, or by what other devised terms they be distinguished, or confounded. 2. Nor have we heard of *any Rule* assigned by Christ to warrant them how to determinate the *substantial parts of worship*, from the *Integral*, or the *integral parts* from the *circumstantial*: How easie a thing were it to demolish a *substantial part of worship*, pretending it to be only a *circumstantial part*? or to magnifie something of their own, whic'h they have drest up like worship, and then exact *Conformity* to it, and *Union* in it in the *Name of Christ*? for it's a common observation, That when they would wheadle us into Compliance, then every thing

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thing is but a *circumstance*; but when they proceed to chastise us for Nonconformity, then the same things are nick-named *substantialis*, matters of *moment* such as without which *no Church, no Government, no Worship* can possibly breathe or subsist.

And yet if the matter were well searcht into, perhaps we are not so clearly agreed in the *substantial parts of worship*: An outward visible sign of an inward and invisible grace, whereby a person is dedicated to the profession of, and subjection to the Redeemer, is a *substantial part of worship*: If it be instituted by Christ, 'tis a divine, lawful part of worship, and he will bless it; If only appointed by man out of his great tendernels to supply the defects of Christ's Institution, this is also a part of worship, but *humane*; it has the matter, and outward form, only wanting the right efficient cause; it wants that which should give it the stamp of *Authentical and warrantable worship*.

Again, we see with our eyes worshipping towards the *Altar, the East*, and at the sound of the word *Jesus*: and these things are made the Motive of worship, if not something else; perhaps *no Canon* enforce these, but yet they are generally practised by all that hope to make earnings and good wages out of the Churches preferments. Now whether the Conformists exceed the *Canons*, or the Nonconformists fall short of them, 'tis still the same case, and there will be the same or greater difference, than if the former kept level with the Rule, and the other came short of it; or the latter came up to the Rule, and the other transcended it.

The Doctor will tell us, *That to bow at the Name of Jesus, is no more than going to Church at the Tolling of a Bell*, Defence, p. 864. and is very facetious and pleasant with his adversary *T. G.* drolling about *Whittingtons Bells*, and *Meg of Westminster*, p. 867. nor ought any man dare to check the excellent wit of these Repartees, only it had been wisht he had bestowed a little fancy on *Whittingtons Cat*: but I assure the Doctor, in many indifferent mens judgment, the Objection is not so easily doffed off; for why may not an *Image* give warning to the eye when to worship God, as well as a *Bell to the Ear*? 'Tis true indeed, the *Papists* have preferred an *Image* higher, than to be *Motivum Cultus*; but the question is, Whether they do not sin in applying it to this *lower use*, to make it an ordinary stated *Motive to worship*? If they do, how shall we excuse our own Adorations? if not, why do we not introduce *Images* into our Churches, as well as these other of bowing towards the *Altar, &c*? which if once our Church-men shall venture upon (as with equal reason they may do), they'll find them not a *Bell to Toll* *Dissenters into the Church*, but thousands of *Assenters out of it*. Besides his Illustration is very lame, though witty enough; for the *Bell tolls out of worship* to Convene the people to the worship of God: but the sound of the word *Jesus* is used in the *midst*, in the *height*, in the *heat* of worship, when the soul should be most firmly, ardently intent upon its Devotion, and not sit listning and watching, as *Whittingtons*

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Tingtongs Cat watcht the Mouse (there 'tis for you) for the casual starting of a word, and the dropping of two syllables. But if it be a duty to give external reverence to God when ever the word *Jesus* is named, there's more need of it in our ordinary Converses, and the secular affairs of this world, when those divertisements distract our minds from the actual thoughts of God, which might be retrieved by this Doctrine ; and so that word might do the service of *another Bell*, I mean that which in Popish Countries goes *Ting tang, ting tang*, before the *Hoste*, when carried to the sick, or dying, from which all that meet it are obliged to take the hint, and fall down and worship.

The moderation of that Canon, 1640, which recommends bowing towards the East, or Altar, is very commendable: *In the practise or omission of this Rite, we desire the Rule of Charity prescribed by the Apostle may be observed; which is, That they which use this Rite, despise not them who use it not; and they who use it not, condemn not those that use it.* I would gladly hear a fair Reason given, why the Apostle should prescribe the Rule of Charity to be observed in this one Rite or Ceremony, more than another? why the Rule of Charity should take place in bowing towards the Altar, and yet the Rule of severity in the sign of the Cross, and kneeling at the Lords Supper? what solid Reason can they give, why they make fish of one, and flesh of another? The Apostle prescribes a Rule, and they will make use of it, when, where, and in what cases they please; and in others where 'tis as useful, lay it by, like one of their vacated Canons. Is it because we are bound to walk according to the Rule prescribed by the Church? why are not they bound to walk according to the Rule prescribed by the Apostle? Are we more bound to obey them, than they the Lord Christ, speaking in and by his immediately inspired servants? why could they not have relaxed the other Canons to the moderation of this? or why not have screwed up this to the inflexible rigour of the others? was it for peace sake that we were indulged in this one? Let the same Motive prevail for the same Indulgence in the rest! was it to shew their Authority, that they may bind and loose, command what they please, and leave what they see good at liberty, without rendring a Reason, but that of their Wills? Such arbitrary power is too great an encroachment upon the freehold of Conscience, and Sovereignty of Christ, and will justifie any Christian to assert that liberty against it, wherein Christ has instated him. Was it because the people had been broken by long use and custom to the others, and therefore they would struggle hard to keep the ground they had got, when this latter was but a Novice, a Candidate, a Probationer for Acceptation, which if the people would tamely bow their necks unto, they might be cramped with a more peremptory Canon when time should serve; but if they proved restiff and cross-grain'd, the next Convocation might make an honourable retreat?

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And what if now we are stumbling ere we are aware upon the true Reason of the diversity between the tempers of this, and some other Canons? However, whether these things be commanded, or merely recommended, or barely permitted, all is a case as to my Argument; for I find these things practised by all our leading Church-men; All the Fathers of the Church, all the Mother-Churches are agreed; all that pretend to any hopes of comfortable importance, are agreed to outrun the Constable, and though herein they outrun one another, and all of them outrun the Dissenters; and this is a difference in something more than a circumstance, even at least in a circumstantial part of worship; yet must we be supposed to be agreed.

This last mention'd Canon of the Church, I hear is repealed by *Act of Parliament*, which plainly proves, that the Civil Magistrate has more authority even in matters of worship, than the whole Church, as a Church, when most solemnly met together in the Representative Church (as they call it) of a Convocation; and yet the practice runs with a full stream towards their own old Canon, as if they secretly gave greater Deference to the Authority of the Church against the Parliament; for the leading-practice of the grand Ecclesiasticks is tantamount to a Canon, nay to a Law, to those whose hopes and expectancies teach them a dependance on them; so that this now obsolete Canon has past into the nature of a Commandment, much like the o'd Statute, *Ne Rectores proterviant Arbores in Cemeterio*; the Tenor whereof runs thus: *Which things we will not command to be done, but we will commend it when it is done.*

Secondly, The Doctor having prudently supposed one ha'f, comes to prove the other half; and it's wisely done to lose nothing for asking: He argues thus: *If it be lawful to separate upon pertece of greater purity* (suppose as before supposed) *then a bare difference in opinion as to some circumstantialis will be a sufficient ground to break Communion, and set up new Churches.* To which I answier, 1. by denying the consequence; strange! what deny the consequence? what can be plainer? Where there's an agreement, a confessed agreement in doctrine, and the substantial parts of worship: what can you pretend to divide in, to separate upon, but some sorry circumstances, unless you will make a Schism about Goats Wool, or Moon-shine in the water? But if you please, Sir, to have a little patience, I'll tell you! substantial parts of worship, and bare circumstances, are not so immediately opposed, but there lies a certain thing in the middle between them: upon which middle thing, though otherwise we were agreed in Doctrine, and the substantial parts of worship, it will be lawful to divide; I say it again, there is a Medium between substantial parts of worship, and bare circumstances; A bare circumstance is that which adheres to every action, as it is an action; to every natural body, as 'tis a natural body; every action, whether civil or sacred, must be performed in some time; every body must be circumscribed in some place; A substantial part of worship,

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is a Term of the Doctors, and his Friends making, and we may expect it should be of their explaining ; As far as I can understand, they mean by it either, 1. that which God has *expressly commanded* ; or 2. some *notable parts of worship*, as the *Sacraments* ; or 3. that which God *mainly requires*, as the directing our hearts to himself, as the *object and end* of our worship ; or 4. *I cannot tell what*, till they tell me : but besides these two extremes, there are some intermediate things, which are neither *natural circumstances* cleaving to the person that worshippeth, nor to the Religious action it self, on the one hand : nor yet on the other hand, are they commanded by God, either *in genere*, or *in specie*, i. e. God has neither commanded the *things themselves*, nor are the *things necessary* to the performing *those things that he has commanded*, nor any of *their kind* ; nor are they included *in any general rule, or precept of the Gospel* : And yet it has pleased the Church, that is, the *Episcopal party*, to exalt these things to a high pre ferment in worship, to signify the same things with the *Sacramental Elements*, to make them *necessary to salvation*, as far as man can make them, that is to lay them as *Conditions* in the way of our enjoying the *Sacraments*, which, they say, *God has made necessary to salvation* ; and lay the *stress and weight* of the *Churches peace, safety and unity*, upon these things, translated out of their proper places ; and that these things so used, so applied, so cloathed with their present circumstances, are *sinful*, is not our bare *opinion* (as the Doctor wisely phraseth it) but our settled *judgment*, which we have, do, and shall maintain against them, when they have once leisure to understand the Question : We have therefore something to divide upon, besides *substantial parts of worship and circumstances*. And now where is this consequence, which to an intelligent and observing Reader, is the only strength of his Sermon ? But we need never fear it, the Clergy will be sure to find us matter for quarrel and contention, or it shall go hard, besides a parcel of *inconsiderable circumstances*, which may be determined, but very sorrowly, by those that pretend most to the power ; for he that *worst may*, commonly holds the *Candle*. But 2. for further answer, let him go back to the former Discourse, where I have proved that the foundation upon which his discourse is built, is weak, and therefore the whole superstructure must tumble upon his own head ; for he supposeth there is *an agreement in Doctrine, and the substantial parts of worship*, which we either deny, or cannot grant till we are taught what he means by them.

The Controversie therefore stands upon the same bottom on wh ch it has stood these hundred years, and more, like that famous *stone in the West*, which they say, *a child make shake, but a hundred men cannot overturn*. Every wrangler can jostle our principles, but the United force of the world cannot overthrow them ; *True men* may be killed, but *Truth* will outlive all enmity. This argument of the Doctors has been frequently answered, and exposed ; but now like an old Livery new turn'd, and fresh trim'd up with a new Lace, it passes

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passes for a spruce piece of Gallantry, a brisk sally of Ratiocination ; so considerable it is, *who* it is that speaks and writes, more than *what* is spoken or written ! So have I known a sorry Jade, which in the hands of the poor Countrey-man, would not give five Marks ; when in the hands of a Gentleman, a little curried up, well managed by a nimble Jockey, and stoutly voucht for, by one that was no slave to his word, fetch roundly Twenty Guineys at the hands of a youngster that had more money than wit.

What has hitherto engroft the whole strength of the Doctors Reason, he now comes to set a fine edg and gloss upon with his Rhetorick : To separate (says he) *considering the variety of mens fancies about these matters, is to make an infinite Divisibility in Churches, without any possible stop to further Separation.* Which is nothing but the Echo of that Charge, which from their *Roman* Adversaries has so long and loudly rung about their own Ears. I shall only say, *That the power which he ascribes to National Churches, considering the great variety of the fancies and humours in finding out and imposing their own Inventions, will but make burdens innumerable and intolerable, without any possible stop to further and greater vexations ;* only let him not always miscall *Conscience* by the scandalous name of *Fancy* ! The very truth is, we have no Mathematical Certainty in these matters ; no such Demonstration, *Cui non potest subesse falso*, which *Archbishop Laud* (and by consequence the Doctor) requires of all Dissenters ; when yet he could find no such demonstration for *the being of a God* (as I shall evince ere long). But some will *scruple* where *they need not*, and others to cry *quit* with them, will *impose* where *they ought not* ; and thus between *weaknes*s and *wilfulness*, between *little knowldg* and *great pride*, humble peaceable Christian are like to have a fine time on't : But from some inconsiderabe, and petty inconveniences, some little trouble that arises to a Church from the levity and volubility of mens minds, to bring in that enormous, monstrous principle, of enslaving all mens judgments and consciences, forcing them to surrender their Reasons to naked will and pleasure, and put all that's worth owning in their Beings, into the hands of those of whose fidelity and tenderness to keep and dispose of them, they have had no better experience, and can have no good security ; is a Medicine worse than that Poyson, even as much as 'tis better to have a Rational Soul, though subject to mistakes, than the Soul of a Brute, which may be managed as you will, with a strong Bit and Bridle.

Honoured Sir ! you see how I have wearied my self to tire you, with the prolixity of this Letter ; and now to refresh you in the clofe, I'le tell you a piece of News : The Doctor tells us, That *If once the people be brought to understand, and practise their duty as to Communion with our Churches, other difficulties, which obstruct our Union, will be more easily removed.* It's incredible what the various Votes of the Coffee-houses are about those words ; some say, Ay ! If there were no Nonconformists, there would be no Nonconformity ;

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if there were no disagreement, we should all be agreed: others again deny it; and say, That though the people were brought to understand, and practise all their duty which they owe to God and man, yet the same difference, the same distance would continue, except it be first proved (which they are always coming towards, but can never find a time to come to) that it is their duty to hold entire Communion with the Parish-Churches: others again of the more warm tempers, assert, That if the people could be brought to understand and practise their duty in these matters, those Assemblies would be thinner than they are; and some protest it's a most Meridian Truth, that if men could be brought to conform in practise (but there lies the cunning on't) though against the shins and conscience, all other difficulties would be easily removed; for they that are once engaged in a practise (whether by slavish fears, or worldly hopes, it makes no matter) must study Arguments to defend their practise as well as they can, and they vouch infallible experience to justifie their opinion; for (say they) throw a Dog into a River over head and ears, if he will not take care to swim out, let him be drown'd.

It's mighty pleasing to me to hear the Doctor profess, he has endeavoured to pursue his design, without sharp and provoking reflections on the persons of any: for though you, Sir! have noted several passages, as inconsistent with the sincerity of this expression, yet I doubt not to clear up his Integrity. You mention Page 38. where, I confess, the Doctor does say, *The most godly among them [Dissenters] can least endure to be told of their faults.* This did a little startle me, but not stumble me into a disbelief of his Honesty: for though he tells us, he has not used provoking reflections on the persons of any, i. e. by name; yet he might with a good conscience, and without contradiction to his word, make sharp provoking reflexions upon the whole generation of the Dissenters, and condemn them in the lump: And whereas you insist upon't, that the expression is either a *scurrilous Sarcasm*, unbecoming a Sermon; or very *unchristian*, as presuming to judg mens hearts; or a ridiculous piece of non-sense, seeing they cannot be supposed the *most godly* (except they be all Villains) *among them*, who *cannot bear reproof for their faults*, which is a main part of Godliness: yet I have this to say; 'Tis exceeding hard for Ministers when they mount the Pulpit, to leave their pride and passion behind them in their Studies, or in the Desk: besides a Sermon, except a little larded with a line or two of bitterness, would not have pleased the pallate of the Reader from the Press, whatever it might, some of the Auditors from the Pulpit: Nor must you, Sir! be too rigid in exacting all things to the precise Rule of Gods word, when the Doctor in his Sermon has propounded you another Rule than that of the word to walk by.

In a word, Sir! the great trouble I have given you in this Epistle, will ease you of much in the Discourse it self; And having here opened the springs of his Reasonings, you may with more ease and delight trace them in all the wind-

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windings and twinings of the streams. If I obtain your *pardon*, I shall receive it as a *Reward*; and for you, *not to Censure*, is more than some twenty mens *Commendation*; and if I fall short of your expectation, I shall yet gain one advantage, That you will not hereafter engage, in what is above him,

Your Faithful Servitor,

T. P.



The Mischief of IMPOSITIONS, or a Sovereign Antidote against a late Discourse, called The Mischief of Separation.

SECT. I.

The Author's Introductory Discourse considered; Designs for Peace and Union plausible; as ordinarily managed, unsuccessful.

I Have read an elegant Oration in praise of a *Quartane Ague*; Another, Extolling the incomparable virtues of the *Gout*; and one great Wit would needs write in commendation of its only enemy, *Folly*; but never yet could meet with a *Panegyrick* in Honour of *Fishty-cuffs*, and *Bloody noses*. Whoever therefore shall employ his Pen to write, his Tongue to plead in the Cause of *Peace and Union*, is secure to carry the day, without controul; and may claim the Priviledge of him that is of *Counsel for the King*, to have the *first and last word* to himself.

But many cry *Hosannah to Peace* one day, who will crucifie it the next: And whilst they seem with the *good Angels*, to proclaim *Peace on Earth*, yet some so far do imitate the *evil ones*, that they have *no good will towards men*. So common it is, to make a *Preface for Peace* to Usher in an *Alarm to war*; and Invitations to *Union* a fair Pretext for persecution; as a Reverend Divine once told his Auditors in the Pulpit, *Plain dealning is a Jewel, but he that uses it will dye a Beggar*.

There is nothing more common than to press the *necessity of Union*, and yet at the same time to continue the *necessary causes of Division*: which sort of Rhetoricians might do well to consider, that whilst they declaim most passionately against the *evil of Separation*, they do but whip their *own crimes upon other mens backs*, and reproach themselves by railing at other mens faults. In which popular discourses, we hear of nothing, but the *prejudice, passion, Interest* of those who will *not obey*; but not a word, I warrant you, of their own *Pride, Rigor, and Imperiousness*, in what they command; always studying and pretending Reasons why matters ought to be *wrong*, but never offering rational expedients to set what is *wrong*, to *Rights*.

Were it lawful to be pleaint in a case so sad as ours is, this *Author* has given us the temptation, and that only by *Inverting his words*, without the least

perverting of the Truth: There's no impossibility, nor considerable difficulty to
 Retrieve the universal Peace of the Christian world, if all men were such Chris-
 tians as they ought to be; (which I dare engage for them they never will) but till
 mens Lordly pride be subdued to a greater degree than the world has yet found it,
 'tis in vain to expect this state of peace and tranquility in the Church. Nor shall
 we need to go far, (not a step) from home, for a sufficient evidence of this; for
 though our differences are such, as the wiser Protestants abroad, not only condemn,
 but wonder at, (and the Protestants at home smart under the effects of them)
 yet has it puzzled the wisest persons among us, to compose them; because they that
 presume themselves to be, and really should have been so, have more studied
 to bring in the causes, than to remove the consequences of our troubles: But
 the most surprising thing in all the Doctors preamble, is his sad complaint, that
 neither the miseries we have felt, nor the calamities we fear, nor the terrible judg-
 ments of God upon us, nor the unexpected deliverances vouchsafed to us, nor the
 common danger we are yet in, have abated mens heats, nor allayed their passions,
 or made them more willing to unite with our establisht Church and Religion. And
 may not others make as sad reflections upon these things as himself? That nei-
 ther these, any of these, nor all these, nor as many more than all these, have
 abated mens Rigors, nor mitigated their fury, nor allayed the ugly lust of
 trampling on, and triumphing over Conscience, nor quenched that immortal
 spark of aspiring after Empire and Dominion over souls; but still they are as
 unwilling, nay more unwilling to render the present Constitution such as may
 safely, and comfortably be complied with? And have they indeed *felt such*
miseries? Why has not *passion* taught them *compassion*? and what is that bur-
 den they *feel*? are loads of Honour and Wealth grown such insupportable
 grievances? or do they not call (like those that are to be *prest to death*) *more*
weight for the Lord's sake, more weight! But do they indeed *fear future calamities*? give others a little ease from their *present calamities*? are they appre-
 hensive of *approaching dangers*? what will they do to prevent them? which of
 their severities will they suspend till the danger is over, that they may then
 more safely at it again? Are the terrible judgments of God upon them? why
 will they not keep one of Gods fasts to remove them? Isa. 58. 6. *to loose the*
bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, to let the oppressed go free, and
to break every yoke. Some will say, this Scripture is impertinently applied:
 well, be it so! yet I have this to comfort me, 'tis not so hugely wide as that
 quoted by the Dr. *Judg. 5. 15. 16.* Who confesses he *neither understood it, nor*
was concern'd in it. Nor yet so much as his *Text*: who infers that we must *walk*
 further then, because we are commanded to *walk as far as we have already at-*
tained. But have they enjoyed such *unexpected deliverances*? Let them not
 say, *we are delivered to commit all these abominations!* And are we all in *common*
danger? Let us share in the *common favour!* contribute to the *common secu-*
rity! and do not weaken the hands of friends, strengthen the hands of *common*
enemies ;

enemies; nor make it indifferent to dissenters, whether they be smothered in the house, or forced to venture their necks by leaping out at the windows: for so have the miserable Hungarians been tempted to think it better to live, nay to dye once, under the Ottoman sword, than to be always dying under the Austrian tyranny. I shall then begin to believe that man is afraid of a Paroxysm of the Gout, who will retrench his intemperance to prevent it; and will then suppose them real and sincere in complaining of what they feel, or fear, when they will forbear, or do, at least some very little thing, to remove the one, and obviate the other: But *Dominion* even in a *Dungeon* is too sweet a morsel to be spit up again, unless God gives a strong vomit; A Prelatical spirit will be persecuting when in exile at *Frankfurt*; and the *Jesuits* thought it worthy their ambition, to vex the *Seculars*, even in *Wiesbach Castle*.

Let then the Dr. conclude with that grave sentence. *All parties pretend a Zeal for Peace, so they may have it in their own way; by which it appears, that it's not peace they aim at, but victory; nor unity so much as having their own wills.* I will therefore compound with him at ten shillings per pound, that is, let him take one half of this for truth, and resign me the other; *That one party has a Zeal for Peace, so they may have it in their own way; and then I shall gain this by the bargain; That it's not Peace they seek, but Victory; nor Unity, so much as having their own wills.*

Peace then (without bringing in St. *Austin* for a voucher) is a good thing, yea, a very good thing it is, if we could catch it; but thus have I seen one sport with his Dog, shewing him a crust, which when the poor Cur has zealously jump't to reach, he holds it up higher, and never intends him one snap of it.

Our *Romish adversaries* (it seems) do continually upbraid us with our *Schisms* and *Separations*. (Let'em look at home!) To take off which reproach, the Dr. thinks, it would be happy, if all those who agree in renouncing the errors and corruptions of the *Roman Church*, could as easily joyn together in the great duties of our common Religion, that is in our *prayers*, and *praises*, and *Sacraments*, and all solemn acts of divine worship. And will this makes us all happy? Then I proclaim to all *Protestants* from this day forward, *solid happiness!* for we all joyn together in the great duties of our common Religion; for though we join not in the *private fancies, niceties, and opinions* of some partie, in the great duties common to all *Protestants* we are fully agreed: Agreed in the *matter* of our *prayers*, if not in the *form*; in the *matter* of our *praises*, though not in the *mode*; in *Sacraments*, though perhaps not in superstitions annexed to them; in the *acts of Divine Worship*, though not in the parts of *humane worship*; in the *substance*, not in *Ceremonie*; and in one *God, one Christ*, though not in one *Place*, which probably we never shall till *St. Pauls* be built, and probably not then neither, but must adjourn our *local meeting* to the day of the *General Assembly*: Thus are we all agreed, who are agreed, and so far as we are agreed in renouncing the errors and corruptions of *Rome*; but if it shall ap-

pear that we are not agreed in this, in vain do we expect agreement in other things.

There are two things, at which the Church might possibly aim, whenever merciful providence should recover it out of the gloomy shades of persecution ; the one, Purity, the other external Splendor and Glory : But it's sadly observable that Churchmen who always engross to themselves the conduct and management of affairs, commonly begin at the wrong end of their work ; securing in the first place their own Grandeur and Dignity, and leaving the Reforming the Abuses which had silently crept in, as a matter of less concernment to their better leisure : So was it in the days of Constantine, Queen Elizabeth, so was it in our own, when the Clergy fell a scrambling for preferments, (as boys for a largess of nuts and apples,) whilst Reformation lay a bleeding, a gasping, a dying, for they had other Irons in the Fire, which must not cool ; so the So. bonist in his *Philosopl. i. Vulgaris refutata*, informs us ; *Iam postquam horrenda tyrannorum Carnisincine desi runt, & pax omnimoda parta est, &c.* That is, When once the bloody shambles of Tyrants by God's Providence were shut up, and welcome Peace began to shine upon the late clouded Churches, they wisely fell to work with exterior things, and busied themselves about Religious Rites, Ceremonies, Ornaments ; about matters of Order, and Subordination ; about the Degrees of Ministers, their outward Splendor, the power and efficacy of Church Discipline ; about Laws, Canons, and Ecclesiastical Government ; about the Union, and Combination of Churches ; about the exalting some in preeminence above others, and subjection of the poorer to the greater and richer ; about maintaining Uniformity, and preventing Schisms. And this part indeed the Church happily effected ; and when they should have proceeded to the other of Reformation, a dismal Hurricane, by the irruption of the Northern, and barbarous Nations, overspread the face of the Church with Egyptian darkness, that it was some Ages before she could recover her former brightness. This is the sad Fate that commonly attends great and general Deliverances ; Churchmen are cumber'd with many things, and neglect the one thing necessary ; and instead of reducing Doctrine, Worship and Discipline to their Original Integrity, to what they were in the beginning, are otherwise employ'd about settling Liturgies, re enforcing Ceremonies, exacting Uniformity, advancing their own Dignity, till God, in righteous judgment, removes from them the opportunities of acting for themselves, who slighted those inviting junctures wherein they might have served their God. And most men have noted, that within these twenty years Providence offer'd them three seasons, wherein with great ease they might have healed our Breaches ; the first, after His Majesties happy Restauration ; the second, after the Plague, Fire, and War ; the third, after the Discovery of the late Horrid and Popish Plot ; but yet it pleased not God to give them, with the opportunities, to see the things that belong'd to our Peace.

We see then Peace is a Commodity everywhere exposed to view : They complain

plain that we cheapen it, but will not buy: And indeed we would not out-bid our Purses, nor buy Gold too dear. We complain that they offer it, but at such unreasonable Rates, that we cannot reach it; but so have many done, that have got rich Goods in their hands, set 'em too high, outstand a good Market, and at last, perhaps, may be glad to put 'em off for an old Song.

But it's time to come to my self, and attend the *Doctor*, who, after an eloquent Preamble, in commendation of *Peace*, which all men grant; and of the danger of *Divisions*, which none ever yet denied; is pleas'd to command our Attendance to the Word of God, written in *Philip* 3. 16. *Nevertheless whereto we have already attained, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same things.*

S E C T. II.

The Text propounded. The Doctor's manner of raising his Doctrines, considered; his Suppositions, Positions, modestly examined, and proved vain in themselves, and useles to his present purpose.

THE Reverend Author, having set himself this great Task, to prove *Conformity lawfyl*, the present *Separation* sinful, has chosen the words of the Apostle, *Philip*. 3. 16. a little varied from the Original, and something from our own Version, that by that disguise it might better comply with, and subserve his great design.

Nevertheless whereto we have already attain'd, let us walk by the same Rule, let us mind the same things.

A Text, from which of all in the whole Bible, Dissenters least expected their Conviction; for who could have believed that the Apostle, who, in ver. 15, leaves the otherwise minded to *God's instruction*; should, in the next verse, assert the Churches power to make impositions to their destruction; that he should blow cold and hot with one and the same breath; and mount an Ecclesiasticall *Canon*, upon a Platform of Moderation! Some wonder'd where such a killing Text, should be kept secret all this while, that the world should never dream of, never dread the least danger from it: But it seems there was a necessity for it; for being resolv'd not to bring down their Principles to Scripture, they would try if perhaps Scripture might be brought up to their Principles; so easie will it be to convert Dissenters, if once they can pervert the Scriptures.

I cannot conjecture what should ever flatter them, that this Text would become their Prophete, except it be one of these two things, or both:

First, That they met with the word *Kavād* in it, a *Rule* or *Canon*, not in a *Military Notion*, (for great Guns were not then invented) but an *Ecclesiastick* acceptation; for *spiritual Artillery*, which has always done the most dreadful execution: And so to walk by the same Rule, must be (or it's a thousand pities but it should be) to order and govern our selves by the Constitutions of a Convoy.

Convocation, which then was not invented, but in After-Ages might haply be erected : But their own admired *Grotius*, has enter'd a mischievous *Caveat* against this Notion, which may possibly defeat all their hopes from it : *In MS. deest Karōs, ut τὸ ἀντὸν σωζέτι, referatur ad illud εἰς* That is, *In his Manuscript Copy, the word Karōs, or Rule, is quite left out; so that the expression, Let us walk by the same, must be referred to the Antecedent εἰς or [To that;] and then read the words, What we have attained, let us walk up to the same.* And now, I hope, the sense is not so mortal to Dissenters, as was threatened ; and comes to no more but this, *Unto whatsoever measure, or degree of knowledge we have reach'd, let us walk suitably to it* : which one Note has utterly, nay maliciously spoil'd the design of a famous Sermon, and render'd the whole Discourse one great Impertinency. A second thing that might give them hopes of some good from the Text, was a well-sounding expression, *Let us mind the same things* ; which, at a blush, seems to favour the great Darling of Uniformity. And the Reverend Doctor, to render it more plausible, has quite through his whole Sermon made bold to render the Command thus, *Let us mind the same things* : excepting p. 37. where he had occasion to render it, *Do the same things*. And what man dares now question, but that we are all bound to stick it to a Tag, to a Pin, to a Point, in an uniform practice, in all the minutes, all the punctilio's, all the nice and capillary circumstances of worship ? All which fine sport, the bare reading of the original Text will spoil, which is only this: *τὸ ἀντὸν σωζέτι, to mind, or let us mind that very thing.* Here then we find no things, nor same things, nor doing the same things : but that we mind the very thing which the Apostle mention'd to them, and practised himself, ver. 14. *This one thing I do, I press toward the mark for the prize (βεζεῖον) of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.* And the same thing he commands others, ver. 15. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect, mind that thing, τὸ σωζέτι περιν.* what you see me mind that I charge you to mind, that very thing ; but if any of you be short in your attainments, let them wait, & we will wait till God reveal it to them.

These things would have continu'd exceeding plain, had not some private Reasons necessitated men to render them perplexed and obscure ; which how the Author of this Sermon will be able to do, we must now attend.

[1.] The first step the Doctor takes, to make the words his own, is this : *We are (says he) to consider, that an unhappy Schism, or wilful Breach of the Churches Unity, had begun in the Apostles times : there did so, and we have consider'd it, and do find two things considerable. 1. That a Schism, and a wilful Breach, are terms equivalent ; where there is no wilful Breach of Peace, there's no Schism. To be turn'd out of the Church against my will, and besides my deserts, none is of my Schism ; to be kept out of the Church, by the old turn-pikes of sinful conditions, is none of my Schism ; Wilful Obsturacy is the formal reason of Heretical Pravity, and Schismatical Levity. Errare possum, hereticus esse nolo : Invincible Ignorance may betray me to mistakes, but I can chuse*

chuse whether I will be an Heretrick or no : so may I possibly separate, and judge I have just reason so to do ; yet will I not be a Schismatick, nor shall they, with all the skill they have, make me one ; for I will still maintain a Christian frame of spirit towards those from whom I am forced to separate, and separate no further than I am forced. 2. The Reason of that primitive Schism, is more considerable, which (as the Doctor informs us) was upon a difference that arose concerning the necessity of keeping the law of Moses ; and that which made the Schism more dangerous, was, that the beginners of it pretended a Commission from the Apostles. Let now the Reader believe me, I did verily believe it would come to this at last ; That all the Authors of Divisions and separations, would first be imposing unnecessary, doubtful, unscriptural terms of Communion, and then to set a good face upon a bad matter, would pretend Catholick, Apostolick Traditions, Commissions, Decretals, Extravagants, Canons, Constitutions, to justifie their own Usurpations ; and when once they are got into the Saddle, and have the whip-hand of the poor Laity, all that cannot run like Tumblers through these Hoops, shall be rated as Schismatics : Now because the Doctor has a little disguis'd the matter in his Discourse, to make it smile upon his pretensions, I will give the Reader the naked truth of the whole busines.

There were in the Apostles days some Judaizing Christians, who being not well weaned from the Mosaic Ceremonies, would needs compel the Gentile Converts to their old observances, for which they plausibly pretended, that those Rites having been once confessedly establish'd by Divine Authority, and not yet explicitely repealed by any Countermand of Christ, equal to that whereby they had been enjoyned, were still in full force, power, strength and virtue, and did oblige the Gentile world to give their assent and consent to them ; and in pursuance of this imposing humor, they would have obtruded upon them a Canon, *Act 15.5.* That except they were circumcised, and observ'd the law of Moses, they could not be saved. To this Usurpation the Apostles oppose their authority, and taking the Gentile Christians into their protection, vindicate their Liberty, and command them to stand fast in it, and not tamely surrender themselves to the will and pleasures of these imperious Masters : And because St. Peter by his compliance, had hardened these Judaizers in their Superstitions, St. Paul takes him up roundly, reproves him to his face, and strenuously asserts their Gospel Liberty ; which had he not done, the Doctor thinks all the Gentile Christians had been forced either to a compliance with the Jews, or to a perpetual Schism : But herein I must beg his pardon ; for though they had been forced to a Separation, it had been no Schism, which visibly had lain on the other side ; for Paul in his admonition to the Church at Rome, lays all the blame of the Separation not upon them that separate, but on those that gave cause to the Separation, *Rom. 16. 17.* I beseech you, Brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences among you, and avoid them.

them. Where he points to us these three things. 1. That they who *cause divisions*, are the *culpable dividers*: the Imposers must be responsible for the evil consequences of their Impositions. 2. That it's *lawful*, nay a duty, *to divide from those that unwarrantably give such cause of division*; ~~xxlviii. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15.~~ decline, or depart from them. 3. That any Condition of Communion imposed *besides*, as well as *against* the Doctrine received from the Apostles, is a sufficient ground to condemn the Imposers, to justify those that reject such Conditions; for so we read, *πατερ των διδαχην ον ουτε ευαγγελιστε*. And so we find it rendered, *Gal. 1. 8. Though we, or an Angels from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you, than that we have preach'd unto you, πατερ διεγνωσα, let him be accursed.*

Hitherto matters do not work to the Doctor's mind; he does *move*, but *nihil promovere*; the step he has taken, has set his cause a step backward,

[2] And therefore he will try another Experiment, whether the Epistle with the Context may not invite, or draw the Text to his interest.

(1) His first approach he makes thus: *The Apostle exhorts the Philippians to an unanimous and constant resolution in holding fast to the faith of the Gospel, in spite of all the malice and threats of their enemies*, Phil. 1. 27, 28. And most wholsom counsel it is, God give all Dissenters grace to take it; for if once the fears of Troubles and Persecutions, make men afraid to own and maintain their Religion, it will be an easie matter for their enemies first to divide, and then to subdue them. This will not yet do the Doctor's work, nor undo the Dissenters.

(2) He makes a nearer approach, thus: *The Apostle beseeches them, in the most vehement and affectionate manner, not to give way to any differences or divisions among them*. Very good! *As much then as in us lies, we will live peaceably with all men*: But what security shall we have that they will do so with us? We will labour that there be no differences in judgment, (which yet in our imperfect state is not to be expected) but if there be *differences*, we will take care there be no *divisions*; for we are taught to maintain Christian affections towards those that are of *different apprehensions* from our selves, and *different practices* too, proportionable to thole different sentiments, for so the Apostle adjures the Church, Phil. 2. 1, 2. *To be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one mind*. Upon which words the Doctor gives us this Paraphrase, q. d. *I have seen the miserable effects of Divisions in other Churches, (indeed Divisions, that are caused by, or issue out in, hatred, malice, envy, persecution, have effects as miserable as themselves; but what miserable effects did he, or we ever see, that all mens faces were not of one complexion)? Let me therefore entreat you - to avoid the first tendencies to any breaches among you; (and unnecessary Impositions lay the first foundations to these Mischiefs): entertain no jealousies, no unjust suspicions of each other, (as that the most godly among those that differ from you in lesser matters, can least endure to be told of their faults; or that the tenderness of their minds out of meer shame-facedness, keeps them from declaring truth): but shew all the*

the kindness you are able to your fellow-members (and surely you are able to wave these Bones of Centention, these make-bate Ceremonies; you are able to forbear railing, persecuting, are you not)? I confess Pride is an impotency of mind, and Passion a great weaknes of soul; the strongest wills have commonly the weakest reason to govern them; and the ambition of glorying in the flesh of those whom they can make to truckle to their Humours, and Crotchetts, is a pretty flesh-pleasing vanity, which I hope in time you will overcome; so that hitherto we can smell no Plot the Doctor has upon us, no scent of Match or Powder; or how by these Ambages, and remote Fetches he intends to attack us, we discern not.

(3) In the next place therefore he tells us, the Apostle gives *Cautions against some persons, from whom their greatest danger was, viz. such as pretended a mighty zeal for the Law.* Nay, I always suspected our danger would come from that Quarter! but am glad we know our enemies, and do promise him, we'll keep a special eye upon them in all their motions. Some such there are in the world, who are exceeding zealous for Ceremonies and Traditions, and would triumph, if they could carry it, for *Bell, and the Dragon*: such as would knead the world into its old mafs and lump, rather than want of their wills; and as the Judaizers would renounce Christianity, and return to *Moses*, except the Gentiles would conform to their legal obſervances; so have we some such who will revolt to *Rome*, unless they may (not retain, for who hinders them? but) impose their own admired knick-knacks upon others. Now such as these the Apostle deals smartly with; he calls them *Dogs, Evil-workers, the Concision*: because they tore in peices the seamles Coat of Christ, into shreds and tatters, confounding the minds of peaceable Christians, who would willingly have united upon thole plain, easie, reasonable terms upon which they had already received, and professed Christianity, only these peevish trouble-houſes would not let them. And this is remarkable, that the Apostle never gave one hard word to the Conſcientious Difſenter, nor one good word to the Ju-daiſing Imposer, in all his Epistles.

To what end now is all this pompous, ceremonious train of words? to what end are these Posiſtions, Suppoſtions, and Preliminarys? why ſo many Lines, Entrenchments, Gallerieſ? why these tedious Approaches? why all this Spanish Gravity? why does he not fall aboard with his Text, and ſtorm it? Alas! Things are not yet ripe, and ready for ſuch hot ſervice, and therefore ---

(4) —— The Apostle having done this, he perſuades all good Christians to do as he did, ver. 15. *Let us therefore as many as be perfect, be thus minded;* What was that? to affert his liberty? he did ſo, and would not be brought under the power even of lawfull things, 1 Cor. 6. 12. Was it not to put his neck under the old *yoak of bondage*? he did ſo; or did he ſcorn to build up what he had once pluckt down? he did ſo; and would he have us do as he did? Content. Shall we ſtand fast in our liberty as he in his? Content. Must we not build up whatever of humane invenſions we have pluckt down? Content. Would he have us as many as be perfect, be thus minded? Content. Let as many as are

as he was, do as he did ; They that are honour'd with his Attainments, let them come up to his Evangelical Practice : when we were children, we thought, spake, acted as children : Are we grown up to Manhood ? let's put away childish things ! It is a shame not to outgrow our Trinckets, our Rattles, our Hobby horses, when we have outgrown the Rickets. Shall it be said of Christians, as of the Grecians, "Ελληνες οιδενεις. The Greeks are always children : But such were the Judaizers, always learning, never coming to the knowldg of the truth : And you may as soon whip the huge great Boys out of all Religion, as out of one Ceremony ; so fond, so doating, so peevish, foward, awkward, such a whimpering, such a whining, such puleing and powting for Ceremonies, as if they had lost that famous Engine of the Nutcrack, or had been plundered of a pin-box : I have read of a learned man in this nation, who tells us he had quite other sentiments of, and apprehensions about death than most men ; others were afraid to die, but he was ashamed to die : Really, many are afraid of the Ceremonies as sinful, and I am not without those fears too ; but methinks I am greatly ashamed of 'em, as I should that any should spie me riding upon a penny Colt, or a Gelding : No, St. Paul would have them that are thus perfect, grow up into a more manly and generous way of serving and worshipping God ; Though the famous Alcibiades did once (to please a child) condescend, *Ludere par, impar, equitare in Arundine longa.*

To play (the fool) at even or odd ;

And for a hobby horse, ride a rod.

(5.) Hitherto we have felt no wound, but like the bird in the tree, looking at the gunner, wonders what he's fiddling about, till of a sudden she's past feeling : At last the Author comes nearer : Because (says he) many disputes, and differences as to opinion and practice might happen among them, he therefore lays down two Rules to govern themselves by. Here now the Dr. beats up, and gets within our Quarters, and very subtilly would insinuate to the unwary Reader, that the Apostle gave two Rules about one and the same thing ; whereas 'tis evident he gave but one, nor was it possible he should give more in that case : The case which the Dr. supposes, is, that there were differences of opinion and practice among the Philippians : Let it be supposed ! Does the Apostle give two Rules in that case ? No ! but one single Rule, which was the Rule of mutual forbearance, and leaving one another to Gods Instructions : but in another Case, where Christians had attained to be of the like mind, there the Rule was, that they should walk up, and according to what they had attained : But we must go through now we are in, and therefore let us hear what these two Rules are, and what use he will make of them.

1. Rule. If any happen'd to differ from the body of Christians they lived with, they should do it with modesty, and humility : not breaking out into Factions, and Divisions, but waiting for further information : Now here we want that Accuracy that might have been expected from a person of his Abilities : For, 1. He puts it as a rare and extraordinary case [If any happen'd] such a one as might fall out in an age, or so, whereas this was a most familiar Case, and that which the Apostle met with

with everywhere, that there was a difference of apprehensions about the lesser things, at least, of Religion ; nor was he to seek what direction to give in the case, but uniformly determines, that they should not judge, nor despise each other upon these accounts, nor was there ever any Church at any time wherein these differences did not happen : 2. He lays the stress of the duty upon those that differ from the Body of the Christians they live with : It is very true, the Church, or Body of Christians at Philippi, at that time, was found in the Doctrine of the Gospel, Evangelical in their worship, and regular in Government and Discipline ; and therefore it was the duty of those that differed from that body, not to separate from it ; but suppose any happened to differ from the body of Christians they lived with, which were not so, must the Rule hold equally ? is there the same obligation in the case also ? what if a Christian should happen to live at Rome ? what if it should be the Drs. lot to live there ? must he be under the same obligation not to divide from the body ? 3. He supposes the Rule only to be given to the person that happens to differ from the body of the Church, whereas the Rule is mainly given to the Church, how they are to demean themselves toward a dissenting brother, viz. to wait till God shall reveal his mind to the person otherwise minded : Neither is he to act, nor the Church to compel, till God clear it up to his Conscience, that he may act like a Saint, or since Saints is a term of reproach, at least like a Man, & not a Beast : 4. He disguises his rule, by those Terms of Art, faction, separation, &c. whereas faction & separation are two things ; the one always sinful, the other many times a duty.

2. Rule. For those that are come to a firmness, and settlement upon the Christian Principles, he charges them by all means to preserve Unity and Peace among themselves. Now these things also are laid down with as much obscurity as one could wish : For, 1. Is it not the duty of those who are not arrived at that firmness and settlement of judgment, to preserve Unity and Peace ? without question ! only this will handsomly mislead us to a mistake, that Unity and Peace among Christians are unattainable till they are all of one scantling in Opinion ; for this is the fancy that is gotten into mens heads, that we must have peace with all, that in order to Peace there must be Unity of judgment, and uniformity in practice. 2. He says the Apostle charges them by all means to preserve Unity, which if we understand of Gods means, is very true ; but we are not to use our own means, such as a naughty heart would prompt to us ; not to prostitute our Reasons and Consciences to the lust of men, but if it be possible, as much as in us lies, to live in Unity and Peace.

The Text I see is exceedingly unwilling to be dragg'd into the Doctor's service, two or three plucks therefore he will try more, and if it will not come, leave it as incorrigible, and untractable : for (says he) the Apostle supposes two things.

9. 1. The necessity of one fixed, certain Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments among Christians : This the Dr. calls one of the Apostles, but 'tis certainly one of his own supposals : For, 1. We are even now told of two Rules ; one for them that differ from the body of Christians they lived with ; and here the Rule was, to leave them to Gods immediate Care for further illumination ; but now there is but one fixed, standing Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments of Christians : 2. And to what end is there a fixed Rule, inflexible, and untreatable, when dissatisfaction

satisfaction of Conscience about these matters will exempt any man from it? or to what purpose had we a Rule for Indulgence, if now it must be vacated by this certain and fixed Rule? 3. If there be such a necessity of a fixed, standing Rule, notwithstanding mens different attainments; It's a wonder the Scripture that contains all things necessary, should not speak of it, neither of the matter of this Rule; nor the makers of the Rule, nor the Rules by which the Rule must be made.

4. And if there must be one fixed Rule, then perhaps, *The particular forms of Church-government* may in time prove *jure Divino*. 5. And what are we the nearer to satisfaction to be told of a Rule, and not to be told also what that Rule is? If a Scripture-Rule, we agree, but that will not serve his turn; if a Rule sent down by Tradition, that would do his work, but that we want evidence, it was intended by the Apostle: If Christ or his Apostles had made the Rule, with what security of Conscience, with what satisfaction of mind could we acquiesce in it? but if it be a Rule made by the Church-governours of after-times, to hamper, and snickle all that they can get within their clutches, it will alter the case, and we see no reason to give that subjection to it. 6. If there be a necessity of one fixed Rule about things in their own natures indifferent, then when those things by their particular Circumstances, are reduced *ad actum exercitum*, what must the poor Christian do? If the Rule commands him to *Act*, and the Circumstances have made the Act sinful in *that time, place, &c.* where is he now? here's a rule against his acting, here's another made by men for his acting, they might as well have made one Rule more, and that is to hang 'em out of the way, rather than to leave them to be tormented between two contrary rules. 7. If there be a necessity of one fixed Rule in circumstantial matters, how comes it to pass, that the Church of *England* has determined that she has power to alter and vary these Rules according as the sees cause? And, 8. Must this Rule be for the *Universal Church*, or a *National Church*, or a *Particular Church*? If for the *Universal Church*, it crosses the judgment of your *National Church*, which says it is not necessary that *Rites and Ceremonies be alike*: If for a *National Church*, it must be proved that ever the Apostle understood any such Creature: If for a *Particular Church* only, then what will become of *Uniformity* in the face of the *National Church*, which is the great thing for which this Rule is pretended useful and necessary. 9. If there be *a necessity of one fixed standing Rule, notwithstanding differing attainments*; then either this fixed Rule must yield and bend to those weak ones that have not attained to see the lawfulness of it, or those weak ones must be stretch'd and screw'd up to the fixed Rule: If the former, how is it fixed that in thousands of Cases every day must bend? If the latter, what is become of the other Rule, that allows those that have *not attained, to stand or fall to their own Master*, and appoints them to be *left to Gods gracious instruction*? For, 10. The Rule prescribed by the Apostle, *If any man be otherwise minded, is the only fixed Rule in matters of indifferent nature*; which rule is plain Nonsense if there must be another Rule, to which all Christians must come up, notwithstanding their dissatisfactions about it. 11. That which exceedingly prejudices the Doctor's Rule, is, that the universal current and stream of all Expositors run against him. *Grotius* thus glosses it; *Etiam qui de Ritibus aliter*

ter sentiunt, interim sciant Evangelii precepta, qua Divina esse persuasi sunt sib
esse sequenda: i. e. They that differ in their judgments about Rituals, must yet
know, that they are obliged to walk according to the precepts of the Gospel, which they
are persuaded to be of Divine Authority. So that the Rule of Scripture was that
alone to which they were obliged, who were not satisfied about Rites and Cere-
monies. So Tirinus, *Regulam hic intelligit a Christo & Apostolis ejus prescriptam* ;
He understands the Rule prescribed by Christ, & his Apostles *Zanchy* takes it for
the *Rule of Brotherly Love and Holiness* ; and, in a word, all conspire against the
Doctor's interpretation. 12. And why could not the Apostle have spoken intelligi-
bly ? had he pretended any such thing, it had been easie to have said, Not-
withstanding what I said just now of leaving those that have not attained so far
as you and I, to God's instruction ; yet my will is, that you all walk by one fixed
and standing Rule, whether you have attained or no, 'tis no great matter ; I'll
not indulge these peevish tender Consciences ; Let 'em Conform, or the Prelates &
their Chancellors shall admonish them, admonish them, admonish them, thrice with
one breath, and then Excommunicate, and deliver them up to the Devil. To con-
clude, the Doctor had much better have employed his Talents in demonstrating,
1. That by a Rule, is meant a fixed Rule about things indifferent, or dubious. 2. That the Archbishops, Bishops, and Clergy in Convocation, Synod, or Council,
must be the fixers of this Rule. 3. That all are bound, notwithstanding their vari-
ous measures of light, to conform to this Rule. 4. That the Governors of one
Church, or many Churches, may make Rules for other Churches, and force them
upon their Consciences to be observed by Divine Right ; instead of which, and
much more he has to do, he has supposed what he can never demonstrate.

But that we shall soon see, for now he draws apace towards Argument.

I. He tells us, That the phrase, *τῷ ἀντῷ σοιχεῖν κανόνι*, seems to be a continuation
of the former allusion to a Race : for the first thing, the Greeks were wont to do as to
their Exercises, was to circumscribe the bounds wherein they were to be performed ;
now that which fixed & determined those limits, was called *κανόν* by the Greeks, &c.
Had it not been for these Olympic, & other Games & Exercises, I cannot tell what
our modern Criticks would have done for work ; but what does *σοιχεῖν* allude to ?
is that term also applied to a Race ? No ! it's borrowed from the grave marching
of an Army, not the furious running of a Foot match : 'Tis *verbum militare*, a
term of Art in the Tractick, says *Zanchy*. But grant that also, (or I'll yield as
much as reasonably he can desire for peace-sake), still the Question will recur,
what that rule is, by which we must either soberly walk, or swiftly run ? And
there are two things that chiefly stand in competition.

1. *A Rule of Charity*, and mutual forbearance under different practices suitable to their different judgments.

2. *A Rule of Severity*, which determines to one uniform practice, notwithstanding the diversity of judgment, so that all must be drawn, hang'd, and quarter'd, that come not up to this Rule : 'Tis the latter the Doctor now to stily
contends for : and none can blame him if he be for that Rule, because such a rule
would be for him, if he could get it, which is the best reason he can produce for
this Rule.

II. He pleads, therefore it cannot be the Rule of Charity, because the Apostle had spoken to that just before ; but rather (think I) it must be that same Rule, because the Apostle had spoken of it just before, and therefore he calls it the same Rule, τῷ αὐτῷ νόμῳ that is, that very Rule he had just before mention'd ; for they that have attained to the highest measure of knowledge, are not exempted from the Rule of Charity towards those that have less knowledge ; and it's new Grammar, (as well as new Divinity) that a *Relative* cannot agree with his *Antecedent*, because the antecedent went before ; and will destroy the surest way of interpreting Scripture from the Coherence & Context, if we must conceive there can be no reference of what follows after, to that which immediately went before.

III. The Doctor yet argues farther, That the *Philippians* understood already what Rules he had given them, when a Church was first formed among them, and therefore when he mentions a Rule, without declaring what it was, we have reason to believe it was such a Rule which they well knew he had given them before. Well then, 'tis confessed that the Rule the Apostle exhorts them to walk by, was such a rule as he had before given them ; we are assured he had given them a Rule concerning all necessary things ; we are not assured he had given them any Rules for unnecessary things : if the Doctor can, let him produce the Rule, and we are ready to Conform to it. Apocryphal Rules about new Rites, new Ceremonies, new Churches, new Government, we find none, and therefore must be contented with what he had given them before, viz. that Rule by which the new Creature is guided and governed. *Gal 6.16. As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them.* But we have got another Rule, & they that walk not according to that Rule, though conscientiously and strictly walking by the other, no peace shall be on them, no peace shall be with them, but wrath and vengeance, Fire and Fagot, but that time is short.

IV. The Doctor yet further argues from *1 Cor. 11. 34. The rest will I set in order when I come.* And *1 Cor. 7. 17. As God hath distributed to every man, as the Lord hath called every one, so let him walk, and so ordain I in all the Churches.* Herethen we have an Order, an Act or an Ordinance of the Apostles, a fixt standing Rule, to which all are bound to conform themselves ; but what now if they who call themselves the Apostles Successors, will not suffer us to Conform to the Rule ? The Apostles Rule is, *Let every one walk as God has distributed to him.* The modern Rule is, *Let every one walk farther and faster than God has distributed to him.* Well, there's no remedy ; for (says the Doctor) This shews the Apostles did not leave all persons to act as they judg'd fit ; No, I believe they did not, but as God by his Apostles thought fit ; not by Traditions, but Scripture-Revelations ; not by the Flesh, but by the Spirit ; not by their own Wills, or the Wills of men, but by and after the Will of God. But the Apostles made Rules determining their practice : No doubt of that ; but was it about Mint, Anise, and Cummin, or the great and weighty things of the Law ?

V. Still he proceeds ; That although Men might pretend that the things were not in themselves necessary, that they were scrupled by some persons, and therefore were not fit to be imposed upon any, yet he does not find that the Apostles forbore to give Rules in such cases, and to oblige Christians to observe them. To which I say,

1. That

1. That I do not find that the Apostles did attempt to give Rules in such cases, other than the Rule of Charity, of kindness, of mutual forbearing one another ; the Doctor does not find they did forbear. Must we believe they *did every thing* we *do not find they did forbear* ? Really I do not find they did forbear preaching against Liturgies, the Sign of the Cross, Archbishops and Bishops, Archdeacons, and Deans ; will he allow me to conclude, that therefore he did preach against them ? what wild work would an Argument from Authority negatively in matters of Fact make with our Ceremonies ? And what a Hubbub had it raised, if such Reasonings were to be found in the Sermons of the Dissenters ?

2. Let him therefore shew plainly, That the Apostles interposed their Authority, to impose upon the Disciples any one thing, which was not antecedently, some way or other, necessary to that Imposition ; and never stand casting a mist before our eyes, by saying the Apostles *gave Rules in such Cases*, when the Cases are vastly different from those that are in debate amongst us.

VI. He goes on, What the Apostle thus imposed, *was not on the meer authority of Apostles, but as Church-Governors, whose busines is to take care of their preservation.* Not as Apostles, but as Governors ! Things well joyned, but ill divided ! *As they were Apostles, so were they Governors of Churches, to whom the Care of all the Churches was committed, 2 Cor. 11. 28.* There was indeed another matter that should have here been shuffled in, & is handsomly insinuated, That the Apostles in establishing Rules for Rites and Ceremonies, & those other things that are supposed, acted not as extraordinary Officers, whose power was to expire with their persons, but as ordinary Guides, who were to have Successors in their whole Ruling work to the end of the World ; but this is far more easily hinted, than proved : we deny therefore, and wait for evidence,

1. That the Apostles ever made Rules for the determining of unnecessary Circumstances, and imposed them on the Churches as terms of Communion.

2. That Diocesan-Bishops, or Metropolitans, are the Apostles Successors in the governing of Churches.

3. That if they did succeed them in any part of their office and work, yet that they have the same fulness of power, as wanting their infallible direction, wisdom, prudence, and other qualifications that might either move Christ to entrust them with that power, or perjuade Christians to submit to their power.

VII. To sweeten, and set off the Discourse, the Doctor has formed a most ingenious comparison between the power and skill of a General of an Army to command, and the Duty which private Soldiers owe to their General on the one part; and the Authority, Wisdom and Conduct of Church-Governors, to order the Ecclesiastical Militia, and the Duty that private Christians owe to their Orders on the other hand, which would have taken before the Trained Bands, or the Artillery-Company ; at present let it pass for as much as 'tis worth, that is, a specimen of wit, and a rare piece of ingenuity.

VIII. But his great Refuge, his safe retreat, is in and to the *Council at Jerusalem*, concerning which, the Reverend Author expresses himself thus : *Although there were many doubts and scruples in their times about several Rites and Customs, yet the Apostles did give Rules in such cases, and bind Christians to observe them, as we*

we find in that famous Decree made upon great deliberation in the Council of the Apostles at Jerusalem.

To which it were enough to say, That the Apostles did give Rules, but not such as are now given : They gave Rules in the Case that lay before them, but that Case was nothing akin to those Cases which are now before us ; That in what Case soever the Apostles did give Rules, it's nothing to them, who pretend a power to give Rules to us, except they can shew a Commission as fairly drawn and sealed as the Apostles could produce for their Determinations : But yet more particularly,

1. That Decree of the Apostles was about things necessary, antecedent to the Decree ; not necessary, because decreed only ; but therefore decreed, because necessary. *Acts 15. 28. It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us, to lay upon you no greater burthen than these necessary things.* How far is the spirit and temper of modern Imposers from that of the Apostles, who think good to impose upon us the insupportable burthen of unnecessary things !

2. That Council had the infallible guidance and superintendency of the Holy Spirit, (which is not inconsistent with the most serious deliberation) *It seemed good to the Holy Ghost, and to us.* But no National Church ever had any promise, and therefore cannot in Faith pray for, or expect such immediate assistance, such extraordinary direction. Let no Church assume equal power to impose, without an equal Commission for such power.

3. The private Christians might reasonably acquiesce in the Decree, because it had their own consent, antecedent to its making : A wonderful instance, and not to be parallel'd in latter Ages : *There, the Holy Spirits authority, & the Churches consent, go together, but here, we have neither :* That burden will sit the easier on our backs, which first has the approbation of our hearts ; and such was that Decree, not only sent to the Brethren, ver. 23. but by *and from the Brethren. The Apostles and Elders, and Brethren, send greeting unto the Brethren which are of the Gentiles.* But this is not our Case, who have neither head, nor heart, nor hand, nor finger, in imposing those burdens, which it seems good to my Lords the Archbishops, and Bishops, to lay upon us : nor do we know what load we must bear, till we feel it, no more than the poor Pack-horse knows before hand, what it shall please his good Lord and Master to lay upon him.

4. That Decree was not to burden the Churches, but to ease them of those burdens which they already groaned under. The Case was this and it was sad, & partly ours, *Certain men came down from Judea, & taught the Brethren, that except they were circumcised after the manner of Moses, they could not be saved, ver. 1.* Against this Tyranny Paul and Barnabas, the great Assertors of Christian liberty, made vigorous opposition, ver. 2. but the Zealots having reinforced their Faction, from some of the *Sect of the Pharisees, who believed* ver. 5. the Case comes before the Council, who determine against those Bigots, that their blind zeal should not be the measure of necessary, and unnecessary ; and yet not to exasperate them too much, lest perhaps they should revolt from Christ, and apostatize to Moses, (which they were now in a fair way to do, and some of them afterwards did) they agree to lay upon the Gentile Converts *no greater burthen than those necessary things*, in opposition to those other unnecessary things, which the Judaizing Christian contended for as necessary.

5. If

5. If we consider the things imposed, we shall find them none of those trifles which the more pragmatical After-Ages divided the Churches with abstaining from meats offered to Idols, from blood, from things strangled, and from fornication, ver. 25. Of which, Fornication was in it self unlawful; meats offered to Idols (under that notion) were then, and are still unlawful to be eaten; things strangled, had prescription and countenance from most Reverend Antiquity, against their use; and by Blood, some understand Murther, in which sense that also was simply unlawful; but if by Blood be understood, Flesh with the life thereof, which is the Blood, Gen. 9. 4. that is a limb taken from a living creature, and so eaten; to forbid that, was no more than to forbid them to be Cannibals: and if thereby we will understand Blood in the most general acceptation, yet that also was so averse to the Jews, that it's no wonder if the Church agreed to gratifie them in it. Nay, I have known (amongst some others) a Reverend Dignitary of our Church, who from this Decree, and the precepts given to the sons of Noah, Religiously abstained from all things strangled, and from blood, to his dying day.

6. The end of that Decree, was to avoid Scandal; the morality of which, had it been well understood by these raw Gentile Converts, had taught them to deny themselves in a greater matter than things strangled, and blood, rather than give offence to their weak Brethren, without troubling the Church to make any Decree about them: And when this Canon was in its greatest force and vigor, the Gentile Believers might have eaten the *τὸ πικρόν*, privately, yea, in company, where no offence would be given or taken; for what was the Jewish Convert concern'd what another should eat at home, either of the *useis*, or fragments of heathenish Sacrifices, presented to him by his Relations, or of those things killed by suffocation? But alas! the case is otherwise with us; for such is the necessity of the Cross, the white Garment, kneeling at the Supper, &c. That the omission of them shall silence and suspend a learned, faithful, laborious Minister of Jesus Christ *ab officio, & beneficio*, from his work and wages.

7. The Apostles add no penalty, neither pecuniary, corporal, or spiritual, to affright men into compliance with it; but contented themselves to have commanded in the Name of Christ, and of his true Church; they made not those necessary things, the conditions of ministerial, or lay-communion; *Significavit, Writs de Excommunicato capiendo*, were not then invented, nor till a long time after that the Lady-Churches having lost the true spiritual Sword, began to arm themselves with secular power, to back and set an edge upon their Dictates.

8. This Decree was only negative, not positive; a restraint from the use of some, but not an imposition of any. It was onely, This you shall not *Do*, nor, This you shall *Do*. Which kind of Canons are much easier than the other: Conscience may better be tyed up from *acting in a hundred*, than forced

forced to *act in one particular*. A negative precept restrains us from acting at any time, in any Case; an affirmative always obliges, but obliges not always to act in every Case: But things at home are much otherwise, where we are commanded both *what to do*, and *what not to do*; and are still constrain'd to act, even in those things we apprehend against the command of God either in general, or spec' a'.

9. Lastly, It appears from the Apostle *Paul's* After-writings, that when this Decree had a little gratified the Jewish Converts, weaned them a little from their old customs and usages, whereof they were so tenacious, mollified their morose and rugged tempers, sweeten'd and endear'd them towards the *Gentiles*, it expired of course, (as to what obligation it received from man) and lay among those obsolete Canons, which were not regarded, because antiquated; for when the reason of an humane Ecclesiastical Law ceaseth, the Law itself ceaseth, without any *formal Repeal*, which because some expected should have been more solemn, they will not be beaten out on't, but it's still in force.

Thus have we seen the Vanity of the Doctor's Supposition, which he would persuade us is the Apostles, *viz.* That *there was a necessity of one fixed and certain Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments among Christians*: Which I am not afraid to call *vain*, being so dark, that we neither know whether the Rule must be of Divine, or Humane Institution, what the matter of it must be; nor is it proved by Reason, or any Scripture argument, but what is ultimately resolved into that Decree made at *Jerusalem*, which I have now fully shewn will do him, nor his Cause any service.

S E C T. III.

The Diffenters Plea from Rom. 14. and whether the Doctor bath spoken Reason to invalidate their Reasonings from hence?

THE Reverend Dr. having toiled hard to prove the necessity of a fixed standing Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments of Christians about unnecessary matters, and caught nothing to reward his pains, bethinks himself of an objection, that Diffenters might possibly make, which he thus words for them: *Doth not the Apostle in the 14th. chapter of his Epistle to the Rom. lay down quite another Rule? viz. only of mutual forbearance in such Cases where men are unsatisfied in Conscience?* Yes, he doth so, and the same Rule he lays down in the verse before the Drs. Text: *That if any were otherwise minded, they should wait, and not act; the Church should wait, and not impose, but leave them to the instruction of God.* To which the Dr. gives an intimation of a general answer: *That there was a vast difference between the case as it stood then at Rome, and the case as it stood at Philippi: For, (says he) The Church of Rome consisted most of Jews, where they did not impose the necessity of keeping the Law on the Gentile Christians.—And therefore in this case he persuades both parties to forbearance*

rance and charity. But now, in those Churches (suppose at Philippi for one) where the false Apostles made use of the pretence of the Levitical Law, being still in force, to divide the Churches, where the Apostle bids them beware of them and their practices, as being of a dangerous and pernicious consequence: So that the preserving the peace of the Church, and preventing separation was the great measure, according to which the Apostle gave his Directions, and that makes him insist so much on this advice to the Philippians; that whatever their attainments were, they should walk by the same Rule, and mind the same things.

I have often observed, that when men are pincht with plain Scripture, they use to twist and twine, and turn themselves into all shapes, to get out of their streights: and they have no more ordinary way of evasion, than to fancy some imaginary various Cases, upon which a various judgment must be made, and a various Rule laid down, to serve the present turn; which is most notorious in this answer. *The Apostle acted like a prudent governor, (says he) and in such a manner, as he thought did tend most to the propagation of the Gospel, and good of particular Churches:* To which some would reply; that then there are a great many in the world that have acted like fools: But my general answer is, that the Apostle acted upon higher Reasons, than those dictated to humane prudence, even the infallible guidance, and immediate direction of the Holy Ghost; Divine directions, and the supernatural counsels of the H. Spirit, are well consistent; and had he only gone upon (*thinking*) as the Dr. fancies, I had rather have built my faith and practice, upon one of his *thinkings*, than upon one of the Drs. *full persuasions*, 1 Cor. 7. 40. I think also that I have the Spirit of God. And he was not deceived in *so thinking*. But for a particular answer.

§ 1. The Drs. Reason why the Jewish Professors at Rome did not impose on the Gentile Christians, the necessity of keeping the Law of Moses, is this, Because we do not find they did so. And is not this an ingenious course for a person of his learning to suppose the main foundation upon which he builds, the variety of the case, with no other proof, but that he does not find it so? I do not find a thousand things that they did, and must be presumed to have done, and may I thence conclude they never did 'em? and thence make what inferences, collections and conclusions I think good?

§ 2. He asserts, that because the Apostle was willing to have the Law buried with as little noise as might be, that therefore in this case, he persuades both parties to forbearance and charity. And what is that other case, or those other cases wherein the Apostle would dispense with forbearance and charity? Are there any select and reserved case; wherein he would have Christians fall together by the ears? was it a duty at Rome not to judge, and despise one another? and will these be such Cardinal Virtues at Philippi? or were they at Rome only to stand or fall to their own Master, and must the poor wretches at Philippi be sold for Gally-slaves? was it good Doctrine in one Church, that every man should be fully persuaded in his own mind, before he adventured upon acting? and was it Heterodox in the other, that

they might debauch and prostitute conscience to all pretenders, and fet their souls for every Dog to piss on? If the Doctor presumed upon his Auditors, had he the same confidence to impose upon his Readers?

§ 3. The Church of Engl. in her Canons of 1640. tells us she followed the Rule prescribed by the Apostle in this chap. to the Romans; and has 40 years more so altered the case? If the Rule of Charity, prescribed by the Apostle to Rome, does reach us here in England, it's less matter whether it obliged them at Philippi or no; and yet that it obliged them also has been made clear from the Text.

§ 4. The Dr. manifestly prevaricates when he tells us, *The Apostle does so much insist upon this advice to the Philippians, that whatever their attainments were, they should walk by the same Rule*, when the innocent Apostle insists upon no such thing. He commands (as I have often observed) the clear contrary, that *different attainments* should have different walkings and practices, that they are to walk as they *have attained*, and not as they *have not attained*: And that Rule to which the Apostle refers, that which he enjoyns is a Rule that may be equally observed under different attainments as under the same: namely, that Evangelical Rule of Charity, which neither infringes Christian Liberty, nor violates conscience, but teaches us to exercise forbearance of one another, notwithstanding our different attainments, which is that Royal Law, commanded by the Apostle James, Jam. 2.8. *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* Not to be repealed by all the authority on earth, nor ever will, by that of Heaven.

§ 5. If the Apostle bids the Churches beware of those who make use of the pretence of the Levitical Law, being still in force to divide the Churches; He does also by parity of Reason bid us beware too of those who upon pretence of any other Ceremonies, old Customs, and apocryphal usages divide the Church, and render Communion with it grievous and burdensome; and I hope we shall hearken to his advice, *to beware of them*, and trust them no further than needs must; especially when those old customs have been found of such dangerous and pernicious consequences, that they have divided, and almost ruined a most flourishing Church, and made way for a common enemy to break in with utmost fury upon us.

§ 6. If the preserving the Peace of the Church and preventing Separation, was the great measure according to which the Apostle gave his Directions; Then those directions (or whatever they are called) that disturb the Churches Peace, and give just cause for Separation, proceed by other measures; and it's time to look about us. When we meet with such a hazard that precious blessing of Peace upon such Rules, Canons and Institutions, as have almost, and (if not seasonably prevented) will destroy us.

S E C T. I V.

Of the Obligation that lies upon Christians to walk by the same Rule. The Doctor's two questions propounded. The former considered; but no answer to it given by him. Several Preliminaries examined.

THE Reverend Dr. having at length got over the flats, and bars, that lay at the mouth of the chanel, is now hoising up his main Sail to the wind: And can we expect his discourse should run more naturally and smoothly? for having begg'd one half of the controversie, he may more easily borrow the rest of it. And therefore from *the obligation that lies upon Christians, to walk by the same Rule* (that is, *such a Rule as he has made for the Apostle, and us*) *There will arise* (says he) *two very considerable Questions*: that is to say, where one absurdity is granted, *two more* (nay twenty) *will follow*.

1 Quest. *How far the obligation doth extend to comply with an established Rule, and to preserve the Peace of the Church we live in?* This question I confess is considerable, very considerable, had he told us *what the Rule establish is*: for there are very crooked ones in the world; and who must be the *Rule-maker*? for there are many pretenders; and then proved that we are to comply with it; but to enquire how far we are to comply, and not make it out, *that we are to comply at all* to such Rules as he has contrived, is not so *considerable* as he would persuade us. And yet seeing the Hare is started, I wish it were caught; and since he has propounded the question, it had been well if he had answered it, which we might demand in Justice; but shall take it for a special favour, if he will at any time hereafter, *tell us how far we are to comply with an establisht Rule*.

At present he cannot be at leisure; in the mean time, *for the preventing all mis-understanding the design of his Discourse, he desires us to consider*;

(1) That he *speaks not of the Separation, or distinct communion of whole Churches from each other*: We are glad of that: First, because if he allow Separation by *whole sale*, we shall do the better, if the *retail trade* be denied: And secondly, because hereby the Churches of the dissenters will be out of the way of his anger: for (as he adds) *These whole Churches, according to Scripture, Anti-quity and Reason, have a just right and power to reform themselves*: If then the Churches of the dissenters be but true Churches, and whole Churches; If they have in them all the essentials of Churches; If they have Pastors rightly qualified, duly chosen, the Word of God purely preached, the Sacraments duly administered, and all other Ordinances of Christ regularly used, they have then power to govern and reform themselves.

But *By whole Churches, he means the Churches of such Nations, which upon the decay of the Roman Empire, resumed their just right of Government to themselves, and upon their owning Christianity, incorporated into one Christian society under the same common Ties, and Rules of Government*. To which I answer;

1. It's not material in this Case what Churches be *means*; for if they be true Churches of Christ, his *ill meaning* will not deprive them; if they be *not so*, his *good meaning will not give them a power to reform themselves*.

2. It may be queried, how those *Churches of the Nations which separated from the Roman Empire*, came by this great priviledge to *reform and govern themselves*, more than others? for if it be an inherent power, and right, all Churches have it; if *not*, who could give it to some more than others?

3. We should be glad to see what right to *govern and reform themselves* was given by the *Scripture to National Churches*; (which yet the Doctor affirms) It had been very convenient to have proved their *Being* from Scripture, before he asserted their *right and power*: And it will make men admire, that the Scripture should give a right to such Churches as it never knew.

4. And if the Churches of those Nations, that were incorporated into national Churches upon the decay of the Roman Empire, did by consent embody for their own preservation, it can hardly be believed, that they design'd their own destruction; that is, that those particular Churches should grant a power to National Ecclesiastical Governours that would deprive them of that power that they had within themselves: For as it cannot be imagined that ever any number of families would embody to set a civil Governour over them, and entrust him with a power that would destroy propriety, or take away paternal authority, or the just power of Masters over Servants; so neither can we suppose in a dream, that particular Churches should agree to unite in such a national frame, as should destroy the power of the Pastors and Elders of the particular Assemblies, so as they should be but the Curates, and their Churches but Chapels of Ease to the Cathedrals, and Bishops, which were prudential Creatures, erected meerly by their own consent.

5. To say that the *Church of Macedonia would have been National, if from being a Roman province, it had become a Christian Kingdom*, is to say thus much and no more: That there would have been a national Church in *Macedonia*, but for a small inconvenience, that there was none.

6. And to say, that the *several Churches of the Lydian, or proconsular Asia would have been a National Church, if they had been united in one Kingdom, and governed by the same authority under the same Rules*: is to say, just as much, that is, *nothing* or nothing to the purpose: for the uniting of several Churches under one Prince, who governs them by the same Authority and Rules, will not make one Church.

7. And what strange kind of Churches were they, *who having assumed their just right of Government, did then own Christianity*, and then incorporate into one Church? where had they their just right of Government, before their owning of Christianity?

8. And if these particular Churches of Nations, had power to incorporate into one National Church; then the *particular Churches* are of Christ's institution, and these

these *National Churches* only prudential contrivances for common security: and then it will follow that the National could have no power but what was freely given them by the particular Churches, which cannot be imagined was ever given to their own Annihilation, or rendering them merely titular; and perhaps they may resume their right, when as weighty reasons do appear for the resumption, as ever there were for their resignation.

9. And if these particular Churches have so far devolved all the intrinsick power which Christ vested them with, upon the National frame, and constitution, that they cannot now govern themselves, reform themselves, or exert the power which they sometimes had and enjoyed; then have they unchurched themselves, and remain only so much matter without form; and then it can be no Schism to separate from them, since all corruptions among them must be immortal when they have foolishly quitted the power of reforming themselves, except the National Church pleases.

This word Church, has made a great noise in the world, and we hear every moment, what wonders, what miracles the Church can do: Now there's a natural curiosit in all men to see that person or thing that boasts of this wonder-working power, and accordingly, we would gladly be acquainted with this body called Church: To satisfy our Humour, the Doctor tells us, *That the true Notion of a Church, is no more than a society of men united together for their order, and government, according to the Rules of the Christian Religion:* which description I perceive marvelously edifies all that hear it: For a Parliament is a society of men, and of men united, and united for their order and government, and truly I believe according to the Rules of the Christian Religion. *Query now, whether the Parliament of England, be not the Church of England.*

I humbly conceive the Dr. fell asleep in the next words; *It's a great mistake* (says he) *to make a Church barely to relate to Acts of Worship; and consequently that the true Notion of a Church, is an Assembly for Divine Worship:* For never certainly was any so bereaved of common sense, as to assert that this is the adequate Notion of a Church. It had been civil to have quoted some one obscure Nonconformist, that in some Book which none ever read but the Dr. has asserted such an Absurdity. We say that the Publick Worship of God is one of the Ends of uniting into a Church Society, but not the only End; and to exclude *Worship*; (as the Dr. seems to do in his description) is as bad, if not worse, than to exclude Discipline and Government: But we agree that Worship is not the only End, there must be Government, Discipline exercised in every Church; what will the Dr. gain by all this, but that our Parochial Churches are not true Churches? And when the Doctor says further, *There must be some other Bond to unite Churches,* (some other besides Worship) I cannot enough admire at the absurdity of the expression, seeing Worship is not the Bond, but the End of Union.

It has been familiar with this Reverend and Learned Person, having been employ'd in more important Controversies, either to mistake, or misrepresent the Nations

tions and Principles of the Dissenters : for so I find him, *Ans. to several Treatises*, p. 180, 181. laying this down as a fundamental Principle (of those who separate from the Church of England) as to Worship, (wherein the difference lies) that nothing is lawful in the Worship of God, but what he has expressly commanded : And at the bottom of the same Page, he repeats the same thing, with the same confidence ; wherein the Dr. treads in the steps of *Archbishop Whitgift*, (and he must tread in his steps if ever he reach *Lambeth*) who in his answer to the Admonition, does charge the Puritans to hold, That nothing was lawful in Worship, but what was expressly commanded in the Word of God ; upon no better ground, than that the Admonition had said, nothing is lawful in Worship, but what God has commanded. To this Mr. *Cartwright* replies, *Is this to interpret mens words ? Are these Praeses equipollent, [Commanded, and expressly commanded ?] Many things are forbidden, many things commanded, which are neither expressly commanded, or forbidden. We say not, no Ceremony, no Order, no Discipline is lawful in the Church, but what is expressly found in the Word of God ; but that men may not act arbitrarily, that they are bound to conform themselves to the general Rules of the Scripture, which are given for us as a Rule by which to square all Religious matters.* Thus far Mr. *Cartwright*. And so do we openly and freely own that direct, immediate consequence from Scripture, or whatever is included in the general Rules of Scripture, shall conclude and determine us in these disputes.

Here again the Dr. thinks he has gravelled us with an unanswerable question. *If (says he) it be mutual consent and agreement which makes a Church, why then may not national Societies agreeing together in the same faith, and under the same government, and discipline be as truly and properly a Church, as any particular Congregation ?* I will tell him why, if he please to hear me out with patience. 1. Because it is not mutual consent and agreement alone in the general, but such agreement and consent as the Gospel warrants, which we have for particular Churches, which were well known to the Scriptures, but not for National, to which constitution, the Scriptures are perfect strangers. 2. Because the end of that consent and agreement must be considered, and looked at ; which is union for worship, though not for worship alone ; to which end national union signifies nothing, seeing that a National Church (unless it be a Church no larger than the Kingdom of *Uz*) can never meet together for that end. 3. Because the particular Churches must consent to nothing that may destroy their own government and power of reforming whatever corruptions by length of time steal and creep in among them : But if his meaning be, that they may be called a Church, it's little to us, what he shall please to call them, seeing we do not intend to draw the Saw of contention about the Nomenclature of that or any other Body.

From reasoning, the Dr. proceeds to *wondring at those who cannot tell what is meant by the Church of England*; and he will inform their ignorance concerning it : *We mean (says he) that society of Christian people which in this Nation are united under the same profession of faith, the same Laws of Government, and Rules of Divine*

Divine Worship. Whence it will follow that the Churches of dissenters are each of them the *Church of England*: For every one of them is, 1. *A society of Christian people*; though perhaps in his judgment but bad ones, yet as good as their Neighbours. 2. *They are in this Nation*, though full sore aginst some mens wills; who would have them removed by *Capital punishments or banishment*. 3. They are united under the same profession of faith, i.e. one half of them are not *Socinians or Arminians*, and the other half *Calvinists*. 4. *They are united under the same laws of Government*. 5. And they have *the same Rules of Divine Worship*: And then it follows too by the Doctor's concession, they have a right of governing each Church its own self, and of reforming errors in Doctrine, and corruptions in Worship.

Notwithstanding this famous definition, what man is the wiser, or knows more than he did before *what the Church of Engl. is?* For 1. We understand not by this Description, who is the visible Head of this Church, whether a *Civil or Ecclesiastical person*, and by consequence are at a loss whether the Church may be called a *Civil or Ecclesiastical Constitution*. 2. We are not informed how this National Church became so united; whether they were driven together by violence, or drew together by their consent; whether it was not some storm or tempest that might jostle them all on a heap, or whether the consent of the particular Congregations was asked, and obtained in order to this coalition: We have seen some Churches in this Nation, that have had their Pastors torn from them, & the Sheep scattered; strangers obtruded upon others, whose persons they knew not, whose ministerial gifts they had no tryal of, and all his right to them was, that he was nominated by a certain Gentleman called the Patron, and the institution of the Diocesan, and if with their consent it was such a one as was obtained by dures, and do well call this uniting; what was it then which united them? why some of the Ministers of the Parochial Churches met together, and chose one or two out of their number, and sent them up to a Convocation, and these meeting with some others, they call Archbishops, and Bishops, Deans, &c. agreed upon a National Church-frame, without the least consent of many of the particular Churches. And this is the too much boasted Union.

(2) Another thing he would have us consider, is, He does not intend to speak of the Terms upon which persons are to be admitted to the exercise of the function of the Ministry, but of the Terms of Lay-communion. And it was advisedly done; for if it be so difficult to render Lay-communion practicable, what will it be to justifie all those terms upon which Ministers are admitted to the function of the Ministry, or the exercise of it? But why does he mention the exercise of the function, and not the function it self? Do they use to ordain Ministers to a Ministerial work, and then prohibit them to exercise the work of their Ministry till further order? Must men pay for an Order to Act, and then be put to purchase another order that they may act according to their order? surely one of these fees might have been saved, and it might have been sufficient either to buy a License to preach without ordination, or an ordination to preach without a License: The Country Chancellors

are more merciful, who do not usually, that I hear of, sell a man a License to marry, and then Compel him to take another License to lie with his Bride.

It is confessed that the Terms upon which Ministers are admitted to their function, and the exercise of it, are more severe than those upon which the Laity (as they love to call them) are admitted to communion in the word and Sacraments; and there might be reason for it, seeing the Laity held no good fat Parsonages, that might tempt any to eject them: But yet the Terms are not such easie things of digestion, but they lie upon the stomachs of thousands to this day, and some of them are as hard to swallow as the biggest gobblers that are imposed upon the Clergy; and they are apt to think that the same terms that are imposed upon their Pastors, are imposed upon themselves by consequence, seeing they approve interpretatively their Ministers subscriptions, their declarations, their oaths, by owning them for their Pastors, whom they know upon such terms to have been aligned to them; nor do they love to have him for their Pastor whom they know to be of a different Religion from theirs: But here are some particulars, wherein the Reader will desire the Doctor's ingenuity, and that plainness which became a sermon.

1. He asserts that there has been a great deal of art used to confound these two; this I say is not honest dealing; for they that Judge Parochial Lay-communion lawful, and have the greatest latitude that way, have from Pres and Pulpit sufficiently proclaimed their minds; and they that judge otherwise have by their own practice and example sufficiently declared their judgment, unless the Dr. be angry that they do not fill up their publick worship with declamations against Ceremonies; and they that have made the nearest approaches to Parochial Communion, have found such bad treatment, that they are tempted to judge, the Clergy are more afraid of their coming wholly in, than keeping out of the Church, and they are to be allowed the fittest judges in this case, because they know best what stock the Church-commons will bear: In the mean time they may take warning how they approach too near that flame which has already singed some of their wings, and may possibly consume their whole bodies, but conscientious men are above those considerations.

2. The Dr. tells us, that in the Judgment of the most impartial among the dissenters, little is to be said on the behalf of the people from whom none of those things are required. None of these things? what, not to dedicate their Children to God by the sign of the Cross? not to kneel at the Sacrament? I am sure the Canons of 1603. have declared (Can. 30.) that in memory of the Cross, and other Reasons, the Church of England hath thought meet to retain the sign of the Cross in Baptism, taking it for a symbol, whereby the Infant is devoted or dedicated to the service of him who dyed the death of the Cross: This is the true import of that Canon, which I cannot now give the Reader the English of *Verbatim*, having only by me a Latin Copy of those Canons. And those of the most impartial among the dissenters, and such as have come nearest to Conformity in their Lay-capacity, will tell you that there are some things which even they in their private station cannot comply withall.

3. The

3. The Dr. does not understand, how they can preach lawfully to a people who commit a sin in hearing them. Either then the things are unintelligible, or the Dr. is not that man of understanding we have alwaies taken him for: what the *Divisions of Reuben* were, he does not well understand, p. 2. *Why many Cities united under one civil government, and the same Rules of Religion, should not be called one national Church,* he cannot understand, p. 19. *And if occasional Communion be lawful, that constant Communion should not be a duty,* is hard to understand, p. 56. And now hear how they can preach lawfully to a people, who commit a fault in hearing them, he does not understand. But what great difficulty lies in this? Some do sin though they hear, and yet not sin because they hear; or there may be a sin in the hearer, and yet no sin in hearing; but whatever the tempers or distempers, the ends and designs of the hearers are, that which justifies the Ministers preaching is his own call to the Ministry, not the qualification of the hearers: A man may come from the next Parish to hear the Dr. when by the Rules of the Church he should have been in his own Parish-Church, and yet the Dr. will not think that this superedes the exercise of his Ministry. Some may come out of custom, because they have used to trundle thither down the hill; others out of curiosity to hear a person of whom fame has spoken so much; others out of a carping humour to pick quarrels, as no doubt Priests and Jesuits have done, and yet the Dr. satisfies himself, that it is his duty to do his Masters work; and however they hear sinfully, schismatically, captiously, yet he is acquitted in his ministerial service.

(3) The Dr. tells us, he does not confound bare suspending Communion in some particular Rites, with either total, or at least ordinary forbearance of Communion in what they judge lawful, and proceeding to the forming of separate Congregations. What great matter is it to us, or to the controversie, what the Dr. shall please to confound, or to distinguish? The law of the nation, which is the assigned Rule and Reason of Conformity, requires total Conformity to all Rites. The Law considers not whether mens scruples be modest or immodest, nor what they judge lawful or unlawful; Conformity is exacted to the whole Liturgy, Ceremonies, and the Laity must not pick and chuse what they can use, and refuse the rest; they must like Travellers on the King's high-way, keep to the road, and not break out here and there to escape the foul way. If the Dr. were the Church of *England*, or the Parliament, it were considerable, but as the case stands, we are under a peremptory law: Now then, if there be some things which we do scruple, and not only scruple, but upon the most impartial scrutiny we can make, do judge sinful, and these be made the condition of enjoying one Sacrament, or other Ordinance of Christ, and that by a Law of his as peremptory as any of these of men, and imposed upon a far more severe penalty than man can inflict, we are bound to live in the constant use of all his Institutions; we must unite our selves to those Churches where we may enjoy them upon better terms.

Thus much in consideration of his considerations: But yet we are to seek for the answer to the Question; *How far we are obliged to comply with an establish Rule?*

Separation of whole Churches is shut out of the Question; Ministerial Conformity is shut out of the Question; suspending Communion in some particular Rites, is shut out of the Question; But where is the answer to the Question? That is adjourned or prorogued, or utterly lost, and therefore *if any honest Gentleman or Citizen has taken up the answer to this Question, lost between St. Pauls and the Guild-Hall Chapel, let him restore it to the owner, and be will be well rewarded for his pains.* And now let the Reader judge, whether the Dissenters are not likely to be well instructed by a Catechism, made up of Questions without Answers?

S E C T. V.

The state of the present Controversie between the disagreeing Parties, (as laid down by the Dr.) what Concessions some Dissenters make, and what use the Dr. makes of them?

THE former Question being laid by at present, he comes to consider the present Case of Separation, and to make the sinfulness and mischief of it appear: And this is it which denominates the Discourse, *The Mischief of Separation:* Though to an impartial Considerer, how loth they are to step over a straw, or to forgo the least of their Impositions, which have made the Separation, it might better have been stiled, *The Mischief of Union.* Now to do this, (as he thinks more convincingly) he will first lay down some *Concessions.* It had been a more convincing method in the judgment of most men, if he had proved Separation sinful from Scripture grounds, rather than from some mens Concessions, seeing I do not understand either that we are bound to stand to their Concessions, or that the Concessions themselves will do his Cause the least service: And they themselves have been so bang'd by the *Papists* by this *Argumentum ad hominem*, that one would think they should have little comfort to use it. We cannot forget how in the Relation of the Conference between the A.B. *Laud*, and the *Jesuit*, the *Lady*, who gave occasion to the Dispute, asked this Question, *Whether a person living and dying in Communion with the Church of Rome, might be saved?* His Grace answered affirmatively. Now what Triumphs before the Victory the *Papists* have made upon this Concession, the Dr. has sufficient cause to understand: You (say they) confess that *Salvation is attainable in Communion with us*: we peremptorily deny it, *That Salvation may be had in your Communion;* And therefore the safest way is, to hold Communion there where both fides agree *Salvation may be attained.* This Argument from that Concession is much stronger, than one drawn from the Concession of any one or many amongst us; because we own no learned men to be our Ecclesiastical Head, as that *Archbishop* was supposed to have been theirs. But thus fared it with them for their Charity to *Rome*, and thus fares it with us for our Charity to them; they cannot own *Rome* to be a true Church, and that persons in that Communion may be saved, but they must hear on't on both fides of their ears; why then did you separate from a true Church, wherein you might have been saved? Nor must we grant the Church of *England* to be a true Church, but presently we are peited with the same Reply that was thrown at their Heads, why then did you separate?

But

But we had rather suffer by our Charitablenes, and their Uncharitablenes, than admit any the least Temptation to deny the Church of *England* to be a true Church, and to hold all the essential Points of Faith, seeing the Dr. himself has granted as much as this comes to, where he allows of Separation; yet let us hear what these Concessions are.

§ 1. *They unanimously confess they find no fault with the Doctrinal Article's of our Church. Doctrinal Articles?* Are there then any *Articles* that are not *Doctrinal*? Every Article contains, as I alwaies thought, some Doctrine or other; and which then are the Non-doctrinal Articles? More particularly,

1. It is not true, that the Dissenters unanimously confess they find no fault with the Doctrine of the Church; for I am confident none of them but do find fault with that Doctrine, *That Children baptized, and dying before the commission of actual sin, are undoubtedly saved.* And that other, *That whosoever believeth not stedfastly all that is contained in the Athanasian Creed, cannot be saved, but shall perish everlastinglly.*

2. They do not believe all the Articles of the Thirty Nine, and particularly not the 20th. of the Churches power to impose *Rites and Ceremonies*; and that also is a Doctrinal Article.

3. But if by *Doctrinal Articles* be intended no more, than those that relate to the *essential Points of saving Faith*, it's true they find no fault with them, but then it's as true, that the Dr. has confess also, *That the Church of Rome maintains all such Articles*, and yet he justifies the Separation from their Communion; whence it will unavoidably follow, that it is lawful to separate from a Church which holds all the essential Points of Faith absolutely necessary to Salvation.

4. And what is it to the Laity, what Doctrinal Articles are contained in the Book compiled 1562. if the contrary Doctrines be now openly preached in those Parochial Churches to which their adherence is required? For if their Communion with the Parish-Churches be the thing which he mainly insists on, it's of more concern to them what is there preach'd, than what Faith they were of an hundred years ago.

§ 2. *They generally yield, that our Parochial Churches are true Churches, and it is with these their Communion is required.* And are not then the Parochial Churches more beholden to the Dissenters, than to the Dr. whose Principles do deny them to be true Churches? For so he tells us, p. 27. That although when the Churches encreased, the occasional Meetings were frequent in several places, yet still there was but one Church, and one Altar, and one Baptistry, and one Bishop: So that the Parochial Congregations are but occasional Meetings, members and appurtenances of the Cathedral, Chapels of Ease under the Mother-Church, but no true Churches, because each has not its proper Bishop: And so they make the Bishop the only Pastor, and the Parochial Teachers to be only his Curates, to ease them of the trouble and cumber of Preaching. And some have observed a strange Innovation in the very office of the Minister of late years; for whereas in the old Ordination of Priests, they enstated them in their whole office, by reading that Text. *Act. 20. 28.*

Feed the Flock, whereof the Holy Ghost hath made you Overseers, or Bishops. This Text is now omitted, and Ministers are ordain'd to Preach when and where the Bishops shall give them a Licence. And thus the Parochial Teachers are no Officers of Christ, but creatures of the Bishops making; nor have they any Jurisdiction, any power of Government or Discipline in their hands, (which all those Pastors whom Christ appointed are vested with) but serve to execute the Decrees, Sentences and Awards of the Chancellors, Officials and Commissaries, without liberty to interpose so much as a judgment of discretion: And though they retain the name of *Rectors*, yet 'tis rather a footstep of what once originally they were, but not any term that carries or imports in it any real authority. And what if the Dissenters do not deny that you have all the Essentials of true Churches, true Doctrine, true Sacraments, and an implicit Covenant between Pastors and People? Do not also our great Clergy-men own and allow, that *Rome* hath all these? The Dr. I am certain, allows them to be true Churches, to have all the Essentials of true Churches, and that they have true Sacraments too; else why are not they re-baptized which from *Rome* are converted, and brought over to the Church of *England*? And true Ministers, else why are they not re-ordained, who, after reconciliation, are allowed to exercise their Ministerial function? when yet a Minister ordained by the Reformed Churches, shall not enjoy that privilege, meerly for want of Episcopal Ordination. And will the Dr. deny that they have the Eucharist in all its essential parts, though they have superadded many gross Corruptions? as they have many Errors in the Doctrine of Faith, which yet does not in his judgment, destroy the essential points of the Christian Doctrine.

(3) *Many of them declare that they hold Communion with our Churches to be lawful.* And then 1. Who is the true Catholick Christian, and who is the real Schismatick? He that holds Communion with all Protestant Churches occasionally lawful, and accordingly holds Communion with them actually as Providence gives him opportunity; or he that denying all Churches to be truly such, except his own, refuses Communion with them, for want of a Ceremony or two, and the necessary consequence of a Ceremony, A Bishop? 2. That they hold Communion with this Church to be lawful, is one of those dubious Propositions which will do the conceding Party no harm, nor them that make use of it any service. *First*, Many of them declare so, and many declare otherwise; but they do neither of them prejudge the other, nor intend to bind them to their private sentiments: and it's as good an argument to prove Communion unlawful, because many declare against it, as 'tis to prove it lawful, because many declare for it. *Secondly*, They declare Communion lawful, but do they declare total Communion lawful? The same persons will tell us, that both these Propositions are true, Communion is lawful, and Communion is unlawful; Communion in some parts of worship is so, in others not: And *Thirdly*, They will further tell us, that Communion with some Parish-Churches is lawful, with others unlawful; that there are not the same Doctrines preached, the same Ceremonies urged, the same rigid terms of Communion in

in all Churches exacted. And lastly, That occasional Communion is, or may be lawful, where a stated and fixed Communion is not so; and they give this reason for their judgment and practice, because to hold Communion with one Church, or sort of Christians, exclusively to all others, is contrary to their true Catholick principles, which teach them to hold Communion, though not equally, with all tolerable Churches; and that there are some things tolerable which are not eligible, wherein they can bear with much for peace-sake, but chuse rather to sit down ordinarily with purer Administrations.

It is a dangerous thing to give us uncertain ambulatory notions of Schism, other than what the Scripture has given us, both because the Scriptures alone can inform us what is the notion of a true Church, and by consequence what must be the true notion of sinful Separation from it; and because these unstable mutable notions of Schism, will make that to be Schism in one Country, which is an innocent thing in another; and that to be Schism one year, which perhaps the next may prove a good and Catholick practice. That was Schism in *England* in *Edward* the 6th's days, which was not so in *Queen Mary's*; and that was Schism in Her Reign, which became none in the days of Her Successor. And we may be Schismatics here in *England*, when, if we cross the water, we shall be none, though we practise the same Worship, and retain all that which at home would have fastened that brand upon us. And if we travel through *Germany*, though perhaps we cannot be Schismatics and Catholicks twice a day, because the miles are very long, yet may we be both backwards & forwards forty times in a Twelvemonth, & continue the same men both in principle & practice that we were when we went our pilgrimage.

It is little to our purpose, what the Dr. is pleased to tell us, what one told him, *viz.* that *An. Dom. 1663. Divers Preachers met at London, to consider how far it was lawful, or their duty to communicate with the Parish-Churches, where they lived, in the Liturgy and Sacraments: or that 20 Reasons were brought in to prove, that it is a duty in some persons, to joyn with some Parish-Churches three times a year in the Lord's Supper: For, 1. If they consider'd how far it was lawful: I hope they spoke something at least to the Question, and left it not as they found it, a Question forsaken of its Answer, which ought to be individual Companions. 2. They met to consider what was lawful for, or a duty to themselves, not for, or to others, in whose names they had no commission to hear and determine the Question. 3. If they inquired how far it was lawful, or a duty; they supposed that it was not unlimitedly so, for to what end should they inquire how far they might go, if they had once thought they could go through? 4. And the design of the twenty Reasons abundantly proves it; for it was but some persons, whose duty it was adjudged to be to receive the Sacrament thrice a year, and it was but in some Parishes neither, where those some persons might communicate, so that there might be some others, many others, possibly the greatest number, whose duty it was so to joyn; and other some Parishes, many others, and possibly the greatest number with whom it was not lawful, or not a duty to hold Communion. The case then is this, a Christian*

rian may be placed in such circumstances, that he may receive the Sacrament from some persons who will indulge him in the questionable Terms, in such places where he cannot enjoy that ordinance at all if he do not receive it there ; and thus, with many restrictions, limitations, distinctions and clauses, a Case may be put, wherein the 20 Reasons may conclude something, but yet nothing to the Dr's. advantage : But what effect, what operation had these 20 Reasons upon the Company ? Why, *none of them seemed to dissent*, that is, they did not enter their several protestations, nor formally declare against the Reasons of their Brother ; like wise and wary persons, they would advise upon them : They came to consider of the lawfulness of Communion, and they would go away and consider of the strength of the Reasons propounded to convince them. I see it's more dangerous than I had thought it to have been, to come into the Parish-Churches, left naked presence, and silent appearing in those Assemblies, should be brought against us, as an interpretative approbation of whatsoever is there done or spoken.

The Dr. adds, That they had *such another Meeting after the Plague and Fire*, (and, if it were but *such another*, there was no great harm in't) *at which they agreed, that Communion with our Church was in it self lawful and good* ; for which he quotes *Plea for Peace*, p. 240. But here the Dr. is tardy, by his favour, and wrongs his Relator manifestly, by nibbling off the last and most considerable words of the sentence—viz. *when it would do no more harm than good* : And we believe it lawful in that case to hold Communion with any Church in the world ; so that now we must come to another enquiry, and start a new question, when there are one or two already up before the Dogs, viz. *Whether Communion with the Parish-Churches will do more harm than good* which it will certainly do ; 1. When such Communion shall persuade the Parish-Churches, that their Frame is *eligible*, and not only *tolerable* ; that they are *righteous*, and *need no repentance* ; *pure*, as well as *true Churches of Christ*, and need no Reformation. 2. When that Communion shall be so managed, that the persons communicating must be obliged to separate from all other Churches, which they judge to be of a purer mold, and wherein they may enjoy all Christ's Ordinances with much greater, and clearer satisfaction to their Consciences, and more notable advantages for edification. 3. When such Communion shall visibly harden the *Papists* in their superstitious usages ; *As kneeling at the Sacrament, bowing before Altars, Churches, the East*, and at the word *Jesus*, has apparently done ; and so much T. G. the Dr's. grand Antagonist, has professed in his Dispute about Idolatry. 4. When such Communion and Conformity shall notably prejudice the Christian Religion in general ; and that this would have been the effect of an universal Conformity, was well express'd by a *Conformable Minister* of good note in the Church, who told his friend, a Captain in His Majesties Service, *That he was heartily glad that so many Ministers had refus'd to Conform upon the Terms proposed*. And being ask'd with some wonderment, a reason of his strange expression, he answered thus : (Not that thereby they had more good Livings to scramble for, as one answer'd,) *Had all Conform'd, the People would have thought there*

there had been nothing in Religion; that it had been only a thing to talk of in the Pulpit, to serve a State design; but now by throwing up their Livings, and exposing themselves and Families to outward ruine, rather than Conform to the things imposed, not agreeable (as they apprehend) to the Gospel they had preached, they have convinced the world, there is a Reality in Religion, and thereby given a check to Atheism.

To shut up this Discourse; If the Dr. would have us Conform as far as we judge it lawful, when such Compliance is cloathed with all its particular circumstances, we are willing to it, provided the Dr. can secure us, that such Compliance shall be accepted in full satisfaction of the debt. But we doubt it must not be the *Dean of St. Paul's*, but the *Convocation* there, that must assign the Limits, Bounds, Terms and Measures of our Conformity. If hearing a Sermon, as we have occasion, and going as much further as Conscience warranted by the Word will permit us, would excuse us from being reviled, and railed at as Schismatics, Rebels, Traitors, and what not, would do it, it would be done; nay, it is done; but, if he has no Commission to treat with us, and compound the matter, I fear he has spoiled the Wit and Ingenuity of his late Allegory, and fought a Skirmish without the Command of his General; for though he stand upon very high Ground, he stands not as yet on the highest, and there are higher than he.

S E C T. VI.

The grounds of the present Separation, assigned by the Dr. examined and cleared.

THE main Question, so solemnly propounded by the R. Dr. having given us the slip, we are entertained with another; *What are the Grounds of the present Separation?* and the utmost he can find in the best Writers of the several Parties amounts but to these two;

1. *That although they are in a State of Separation from the Church, yet this Separation is not Schism.* And he courteously supposes them to have one Reason for this Principle, from the Author of *Evangelical Love*, p. 68. *Our Lord Christ Instituted only Congregational Churches, or particular Assemblies for Divine Worship, which having the sole Church-power in themselves, they are under no Obligation of Communion with other Churches, but only to preserve Peace and Charity with them;* and from the Author of *The true and only way of Concord*, p. 111. *That to devise new Species of Churches (beyond Parochial, or Congregational) without God's Authority, and to impose them on the World (yea in his Name) and call all Dissenters Schismatics, is a far worse usurpation, than to make and Impose new Ceremonies.* This is all the reason the Doctor can find to justify their Separation to be no Sin: But does the vast weight of their Cause hang upon one single string? I can shew him where he may find more assigned by the Author of *Evangelical Love*, whom he quotes. 1. *That there are many things in all Parochial Churches that openly stand in need of Reformation, which these Parochial Churches neither do, nor can, nor have power to Reform.* And who would joyn with them, that have no power to Reform themselves? 2. *Many things in the constant total Communion of Parochial Churches are imposed on the Consciences and Practices of men, which are not according to the mind of Christ.*

Christ. And will Christ Condemn them for Schismaticks, who are ready to come up to his Commands, because they dare advance no further? 3. That there is no Evangelical Church-Discipline administered in such Parochial Churches, which yet is a necessary means unto the Edification of the Churches appointed by Christ himself. And are they Schismaticks who separate not from, but to any of Christ's means for their Edification? 4. The Rule and Government which such Parochial Churches are under (in the room of that which ought to be in and among themselves) viz. by Bishops-Courts, Chancellors, Commissaries, is unknown to the Scriptures: And are they Schismaticks who refuse an unscriptural, for a Scriptural Rule and Government? 5. There is a total Deprivation of the Peoples Liberty to chuse their own Pastors, whereby they are deprived of all use of their Light and Knowledge, for providing for their own Edification. And it's hard that men shall be made Schismaticks, because they would use their Reasons: that is, unless they will be something worse than Men, they cannot be good Christians. 6. That there is a want of due means of Edification in many of those Parochial Congregations, and yet none shall be allowed to provide themselves better. And is it not very severe for Christians to be damned, because they would be more certainly and easily saved? Thus then we see there are other, many other Reasons alledged to justifie such Separation to be no Schism, though it pleased the Doctor to wink at them, and Assign only this one, which yet it's well if he can Confute.

In order to which He thinks, That to clear the practice of Separation from being a Sin, two things are necessary to be done.

§ 1. To prove that a Christian has no obligation to external Communion beyond a Congregational Church. And is this the Duty incumbent upon them? They think they have done enough, if they prove there's an Obligation lies upon them to hold external Communion in that Church whereof they are Members; and let others prove that they are obliged to Communion beyond those Bounds: If the Dissenters enlarge their Communion as far as Christ enlarged the Churches, let them who have enlarged the Bounds of the Churches prove it to be the Dissenters duty to widen their Communion to that Latitude. It's sufficient if they that hold this Principle can justifie it without confuting other mens Notions; & they judge their own Principle & Practice sufficiently authorized from this one thing. Their Doctrine, Communion & Ordinances have the same extent with those of the first Christians. Act. 2. 42. Who continued in the Apostles Doctrine and Fellowship, breaking Bread, & Prayer. And let the opposers prove that any larger extent of Churches, than what answers these ends, is necessary, and they are ready to Conform themselves to it.

What the Dr. hath to say, or however what he hath said, will fall under these heads. (1) I have never seen any tolerable proof, that the Churches planted by the Apostles were limited to Congregations: To which more needs not be said than that, 1. If the Churches planted by the Apostles were in such Congregations, it's no matter to us whether they were limited to such Congregations or no: If Congregational bounds be allowed, let other and larger bounds be proved by them that are concern'd to justifie them. 2. If such particular Churches were not of Christ's institution,

tution, then it would be no Schism to separate from them: I say, no Schism of Christ's condemning; and if others will make other Notions of Schism, which Christ and his Apostles never knew, and so multiply sin without cause, let them contrive a Hell too wherein those sins and Schisms shall be punished.

(2.) The Dr. proceeds, *It's possible at first there might be no more Christians in one City, than could meet in one Assembly for Worship; but where doth it appear that when they multiplied into more Congregations, they did make new and distinct Officers, with a separate power of government?* I confess I know not where any such thing appears, that they made new and distinct Churches; i. e. specifically new, of another kind, sort, or species; but that they did make other Churches, and other Officers, i.e. more Churches, and more Officers, is made appear thus; that if they had not such Officers, their Assemblies had not answered their ends; and if they had not the same power of Government that the other Churches had, they had not been of the same kind, but quite another thing; but what it does not appear the Apostles did, it appears abundantly, the succeeding corrupter times have done, even to form new Churches, new Officers, wholly distinct from those instituted by Christ and his Apostles; and hence it was, that to keep Peace, as is pretended amongst the Pastors of particular Churches, they found out a Bishop, and to keep the Bishops from falling together by the ears, they invented an Arch-bishop; and because the Metropolitans might possibly quarrel, they instituted a Patriarch; & because the Patriarchs were subject to the same passions with other men, prudence contrived a Pope, and clapt him upon them all, to keep them in *Decorum*.

(3.) The Dr. thinks it will not appear credible to any considerate man, that the 5000 in the Church of Jerusalem made one stated and fixed Congregation for Divine Worship. Things are credible or incredible, as some mens interests & occasions will have them, or else it were no such matter to make it credible to the Dr. that 5000, 10000, 20000, might make one stated and fixt Congregation for Worship; he has an instance of it in St. Andrews Holborn, a place which he has cause to know contains more than 5000, and yet they have but one stated, fixed Congregation for Divine Worship.

(4.) The Dr. thinks that much more may be said for limiting Churches to private families, than to particular Congregations: Let us hear it then! Do we not read of the Church in the house of Priscilla and Aquilla? Rom. 16.3,5. and of the Church that was in the house of Nymphas at Colos? Col. 4. 15. and in the house of Philemon in Laodicea? Phil. 2. 3. yes! we do so, and yet hear nothing to the purpose; for a Church may be in a house, and yet not composed of that house: A Church may meet in a family, when it consists of more than the family: A Church of Dissenters may possibly meet in a house, and yet if one of the Ecclesiastick Setters should get them in the wind, and inform against them, that they were there assembled for the Worship of God, with above the number of four besides the family, I fear, A Plea, that they that meet in a family are of the family, would hardly prevent a Conviction.

(5.) Again, the Dr. argues thus, *If, notwithstanding such plain examples, men will extend Churches to Congregations of many families, why may not others extend them to those societies which consist of many Congregations?* I will tell him why, 1. Because his plain examples are plain mistakes; nor can he give one instance of a Church that

consisted of a *family*, because it *was a family*. 2. We read of Churches of *many families*; but of none composed of *many particular Churches*: Many families have warrant to unite into a Church (not *as families*, but as the individuals are duly qualified) in order to the great ends of worship, edification, &c. But *many Churches* have no such warrant to unite for the destruction of those ends, or any one of them; And it is the end, and the usefulness of unity for that end, which must regulate and determine the Union. It is very lawful to build a Ship, or Man of War, as big as 2 or 3 Yatchs, which may do better service; but it's folly to make one that would reach from *Calice* to *Dover*, which must lie like an useless Log, unmeet for sailing, and the ends for which all Ships are built; but let the Dr. extend the name of Church as far as he pleases, to the worlds end, or as far as the *Rules of the King's-bench* have been extended, we are unconcern'd so long as this is clear, That how far foever men may extend Churches, name, or thing, in Compliance with the extent of the Civil Government; yet the extent of our actual Communion in Worship, is no other than that of the Church, of which we are by our own choice Members.

(6) He goes on, *Although when the Churches increased, the occasional Meetings were frequent in several places, yet still there was but one Church, one Altar, one Baptistry, one Bishop*, which will utterly destroy either *Parochial* or *Diocesan* Churches: For if *one Baptistry*, and *one Church* be of the same extent, what will become of the *Diocesan* Church in which there are hundred of those *Baptistries*, and but *one Bishop*? and if *one Bishop*, and *one Church*, be of the same extent, what will become of the *Parochials*, where there is *one Baptistry* indeed, but not *one Bishop*? And it seems very evident, that in the beginning of Christianity, a Church was no larger a Body than could assemble in one place for all the ends of a Christian Society; so the Apostle supposes, *1 Cor. 11.18.* when ye come together in the Church, compar'd with *ver. 20.* when ye come together into one place, συνερχεντες ειμων διπλωτοι αυτοι. where to meet in the Church, and to meet in one place, are phrases of equal Latitude; and so Ignatius in his Epistle to the *Epheſians*. Edit. Voss. p. 20. εις τοις κυριατοις πεσευχην ποσιτων ιησυν οχι, πιστω μαλλον πιπτω επιπλοτα, κυριον εκκλησιας διπλωτοι επιπλοτοι ιησυν συπερηρωατει καντον δικενεν. i. e. If the Prayer of one or two Christians hath such power, how much greater efficacy hath that of the Bishop, and the whole Church? be therefore that cometh not to that place, (or that Congregation) is already proud and hath condemned himself.

Hitherto the Doctor has endeavor'd to overthrow the Principle, which seeing he cannot do, he comes to suppose, or grant it, yet withal denying that from thence any thing can be drawn that will justify Separation.

§ 1. Suppose (says he) that the first Churches, by reason of the small numbers of Believers at that time, were *Congregational*, yet what obligation lies upon us to disturb the Peace of the Church we live in, to reduce Churches to their infant state? To which I answer, none at all; we know no such obligation lies upon us, and do wish that they (supposing the Church to be *Metropolitical*, or *National*) did see no more obligation lying upon them to disturb the Peace of the Churches that we live in, to reduce all to their overgrown state; we are for our own liberty, without infringing theirs; but it's

it's common to complain of other mens unpeaceableness, who will have peace with none but themselves.

§ 2. *They do not think it necessary* (says he) *to introduce the first community of goods, which was far more certainly practised than Congregational Churches, nor to wash one another's feet, though Christ did it, and bad his Disciples do as he did.* I answer, 1. For *Community of Goods*, I dare say I shall convince the Dr. it was no obliging example, for he has no temptation to become a *Leveller*, and would lose more than he could hope to gain by putting all the *Benefices* of the Land into *Hatchpot*. For, there was never any such *command or practice for the promiscuous use* of all outward things, without the free consent of individual Christians; Propriety was not then destroyed, but each Christian was the Proprietor of his Estate; the great exigency of the Church did invite to a very liberal and extraordinary measure of charitable contribution to the necessity of the Saints, but still it was voluntary, and no otherwise forced than by Arguments. *Acts 5.4. While it remained, was it not thy own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power?* εν τη εξωτη. Their Charity did not destroy Propriety: And if the same diftress shoud again overtake any particular Church as that was, it would be as much the duty of the Rich, to extend their Benevolence to the necessity of their poor Brethren as then it was, or could be. 2. For his instance of Christ's *washing his Disciples Feet*, and commanding them *to do as he did*. What person that reads the Scripture, does not observe that it was not the *washing the Feet* that was commanded, but that mutual deference, reciprocal serving of each other, avoiding of ambitious encroaching of one over another, when Christ had made them Equals: this was the great Point Christ would instruct them in by that temporary Ceremony. For so it is commanded, that we lift up *pure hands* without wrath and doubting, *1 Tim. 2.8.* when yet none ever stood so superstitiouly upon't, that every man is bound to *lift up his hands in Prayer*: but the Duty was purity of the whole man. Two things therefore there are in this reasoning, which would be better cleared, 1. That there is no more necessity for the worship of God in particular Assemblies, at all times, under all conditions of the Church, than there was for the *Community of Goods*, in that extraordinary exigence of the Church at that time. 2. That Propriety of our Estates, and the right of our particular Churches to worship God, must give way to National Church Frames, in both which we have some cause to be tender, and not to part with them till we receive better Arguments.

§ 3. The Doctor reasons thus with us: *They believe that the first Civil Government was appointed by God himself over all Families, do they therefore think themselves bound to overthrow Kingdoms, to bring things back to their first institution? if not, why shall the Peace of the Church be in so much worse a condition than that of the Civil State?* To which the Answer is very plain, 1. We look upon our selves under no obligation to *disturb*, much less to *destroy Kingdoms*, or any kind of Government whatever, to reduce things to their first institution, nor is there any need of it, to destroy the Civil Government, by reducing the Church to such a posture, as will answer the great designs of Religion. 2. The same Divine Authority that instituted Civil Government in Families, did also institute Government over Families, whether

ther *Monarchical, Aristocratical, or Democratical*; and if the Doctor can shew that the same Authority, which appointed *particular Churches* for his own service and glory, and the edification of Believers, hath also appointed *National Churches* for the same ends; we shall confess, that his Instance is parallel, his Argument from thence cogent, & such as will cut asunder the Nerves of our Answer; when the wise God did institute *National Civil Government*, yet he reserved entire to the Masters of Families their authority over Servants and Children, and the property in their Estates; but how will this justifie such a *National Church-Government*, as destroys the inherent power of the Pastors of particular Churches, making them only *shadows* of the primitive Pastoral Authority (if *shadows*) and leaving them onely the *bare Name* (if the Name) of Pastors, without any power inherent in them, to govern the Churches, over which the *Holy Ghost* hath made them *Overseers*.

§ 4. He reasons thus, *It's very uncertain whether the Primitive Form were such as they fancy*. If so, then, 1. It is as *uncertain* whether the *Primitive Form* were such as he Fancies; If it were uncertain whether God would be *Worship't* in particular *Congregations*, *that had a power to Govern and Reform themselves*, then it must be as uncertain, nay more uncertain, whether God would have a *Frame Erected* of such *Churches* where God could not be *Worship't*. 2. And if it be *uncertain* what the primitive Form was, then it's very cruel to plague and torment men as *Schismaticks* that are quiet and peaceable, and design nothing but the serving their God, and saving their Souls, for not complying with such a *Form* or *Frame*, which it is uncertain whether it were the *Primitive one* or no. 3. And then it will be *very certain* that there can be no *Obligation* upon us to hold *Communion* with the *Parochial Church*, by *Divine Right*, since it's *uncertain* whether God ever intended such *Assemblies* of *Christians* or no. 4. And then it will be *uncertain* also whether the *Parochial Ministers* be *true Ministers of Christ*; for if there be no *certainty* of the *Divine Right* of particular *Congregations*, there can be as little of *certainty*, that there is any *Divine Authority* given to the *Teachers* of them. And 5. It will be *uncertain* whether God will be *solemnly and publickly Worshipped*; for where can he so be, but in particular *Assemblies*? And thus to make a *National Church* *certain*, he has *reduced all things to an utter uncertainty*.

§ 5. He argues further to this purpose; *It's certainly our Duty to preserve Peace and Unity among Christians, and it's impossible so to do if Men break all orders in Pieces for the fancy they have taken up of a Primitive Platform*. It's well there is something *Certain*, though it's hard to conceive how we should preserve *Peace*, if it be uncertain in what we are to unite and agree: It's the *Unity of the Spirit* that will be kept in the *Bond of Peace*: *Peace* is the *Bond of the Churches*, but there must be first conceived a *Church*, which *Peace* is to bind: There must be a *Vineyard*, or to what purpose a *Hedge*? a *City*, or to what purpose a *Wall* or *Bulwark*? More particularly, 1. As it is the *Duty* of all *Men* to *preserve* the *Churches Peace*, so 'tis theirs especially who have got the *Management* of things in their hands, not to lay such dubious *Terms* in the way of *Peace*, which they know many *Conscientious persons* cannot get over, but have ever stumbled at; for it may be returned with *ease*,

ease, *It is impossible to preserve Peace, if men will make such Orders as they know others must break, meerly for the fancy they have taken up of a Primitive Platform.* 2. If Peace be impossible to be had upon this account, who are in the fault? Dissenters can maintain a fraternal Charity towards them and their Churches, who differ from them in Principle and Practice; if imposers cannot, or will not discharge that Duty reciprocally, we are not responsible for their Passions; we can love them whether they will or no, though we cannot force them against their will to return that Love and Charity. 3. But must Peace be extended no farther than local and actual Communion? or must the Parishes of St. Andrews, Sepulchers and St. Giles go together by the ears, because one Church will not hold the hundredth part of them? I can hold and maintain *Peace* with the *Greek Church*, and yet I never intend actual Communion with it, unless she were much more Reformed from all her Corruptions, than she is like to be in haste. There may be such Corruptions in a Church as may *defile* and yet not *un-Church* it. I can distinguish between the *Christians* and their *Christianity* on one hand, and the *Pollutians* wherewith they have abased their Christianity, on the other.

§ 6. But to this the Dr. Answers, *Men may please themselves in talking of preserving Peace and Love under separate Communions, but our own sad experience shews the contrary.* This is the upshot of his Reasonings; *There can be no Peace under separate Communions*, which I shall answer by asking a few sober questions, which will lead to their respective Answers. 1. Whether by separate Communion, he intends only such as is *Locally separate*? if so, *joyful Experience shews us the contrary*; we have no *Bellum Parochiale*, nor are like to have, could they secure us as well against a *Bellum Episcopale*. 2. Does he, by *Separated Communion*, intend such as differ only in some external Modes? How then do the Countrey Villages agree so well with the *Cathedral Mother-Churches*? It's certain that the Cathedral Service, and that of the under Parishes, differ so much, that a poor Countrey-man dropping in by chance into the Worship would be half affrighted out of his Wits, such a Ditty, such a Din, with Organs, Choristers, Singing-men, and Boys, that from the *uncertain Sound* and confuled noise, the poor Fellow would not know what was *Piped* or *Tooted*: so a grave Alderman in the days of *Yore*, going out with the *Common-bunt*, and being askt if he did not feel a transport and extasie of soul at the ravishing musick of the hounds, protested, he could not hear any musick at all for the barking of those yelping Curs; but come into the Country, we have nothing there but bad Rhimes set to as bad tunes, and worse sung; In the one you have turning hither, faceing thither, such ducking, dopping, bending, bowing, cringing, changing of postures, that the poor country man begins to question whether it be the same God that they and he worship; and if it be, he's amazed that God should regard their rude homespun devotions, when he has such glorious service, such splendid, pompous worship in other places; and yet we do not see that they come to knocking: If then these two sorts can live peaceably, and lovingly together, the one not *despising* the rusticity of the high-shoe devotions; the other not *judging* of, envying at, or grudging against their more stately shows and pageants; why will they quarrel with the plain dissenters whose only fault

fault is that, though their worship is not well trimmed up with ceremonious ribbons, 'tis of as strong stuff, will last as long, and keep the wearer as warm as the other? Whereas the Dr. fancies that this will alienate mens affections: The remedy is to preach down passion, pride, censoriousness, and those base lusts, which would produce the *same effects*, if all men were of *one Communion*: If one will be angry because another mans Nose is longer than his own, he must restrain his anger, for the other cannot help the longitude of his Nose, nor give it one degree less of elevation. Let them punish or otherwise restrain those incendiaries, who by their hot, and fiery tempers, will suffer none to be cool, that are in themselves of a more winterly temper: Let them curb such preachers, as the Author of *Curse ye Meroz*, who did enough to have kindled a greater fire at *Guild-Hall*, than that which begun at *Pudding-Lane*: The disease lies in mens minds, and when they would heal the outward Symptom, 'tis but like him that applied the *plaister to the wrong finger*, and then complained of his plaster. Let men be preach into the spirit of mutual forbearance, and there will be peace under various practices.

These continual beatings of the Dr. and some others upon *Peace*, mind me of what I have somewhere or other, seen or read, of a great Gentleman who courted a Lady of no less virtue than Beauty, and such an *Inamorato* was he grown, that he became exceedingly melancholly, his folded arms, his hat plukt in's eyes, retiredness from all company witnessed great distres; at last he came to a resolution, that seeing he could not win her affections, he would die a Sacrifice in the flame of his own: This noble Lady, (whose name I now remember, was *Madam Peace*,) not willing that any Gentleman should die a Martyr for her sake, began to relent, only she desired him, that he would not be so morose and humoros; however, that he would shave his face, that made him look so like Satyr; & besides, she could not tell how to have communion with his lips, for the bristles of his chin, and the turn-pipes of his over-grown *Mustachoes*; but *Monsieur Moroso*, (for so was the gallant called) protested he would not lose a hair of his beard, (as poor an excrement as the ignorant Lady call'd it) for the greatest Lady in *Europe*: & so all this hot love evaporated in Complement & Ridicule.

S E C T. VII.

The Principle assigned to some others of the Dissenters, considered. The Arguments from the Papers of Accommodation between a Sub-Committee of the Assembly, and their Brethren of the Congregational persuasion, modestly examined.

Hitherto the Drs. reasonings against that principle, *That there is a Separation, but yet the Separation is no Schism*, have fallen under consideration. He proceeds now to that of some others, who confess (as he says) *That to live in a state of Separation from such Churches, as many at least of ours are, is a sin*: what mystery may there be in the phrase of *living in a state of Separation*, I am not well aware of, and therefore cannot prevent what mischief may be design'd against us by it: Of a *state of Nature, and a state of Grace*, we have read in old Protestant Authors, but now-days all the outcry is against this *state of Separation*.

Now the Dr. informs us, That the men of this Plea, deny that they live in a *state of*

of Separation, although they preach when, and where it is forbidden by law, and worship God, and administer Sacraments by other Rules, and after a different manner than what our Church requires. They own Separation to be sinful, and have no other Refuge left but to deny the fact, which is evident to all persons.

In the general I shall only say, that the principles and pleadings of these whom the Dr. would make two parties, are really and indeed *but one and the same*; only they have made use of other expressions to declare their minds: They that say *Separation is lawful*, take the word only for a withdrawing from the Communion of a Church, when they have good reasons to justifie their departure: They that say *Separation is sinful*, take the word in an evil sense, as denoting a departure from a Church out of humour, levity, or some worse principle, as hatred of, opposition to those Churches from which they withdraw. And this he might have seen in those very words he quoted from the *Auth. of Concord*, *Causeless renouncing Communion with true Churches is Schism, especially if it be joyned with setting up Anti-Churches unwarrantably against them*. Now how many things must concur to make Separation culpable, according to the tenor of these words, I can hard'y reckon up. 1. It must be Separation *without cause*, from a true Church. Now the Dr. himself will allow that there may be a *just cause* of Separation from a true Church. 2. It must be *renouncing Communion*; but though these men suspend, or forbear Communion for a while, yet when the Church shall return to her self and abate of her rigors, they carry in their breasts *Animus revertendi*, a propensity to return again. 3. It must be setting up *Churches against Churches*, not one *besides another*, to carry on the common cause of Religion against Atheists, Hereticks, Infidels, profane persons, and all the debauchees both in faith and manners. And 4. all this must be done in an *unwarrantable manner*; the circumstances must be such as cross the general Rules of the Gospel; and if all these be found in any Separation, let it be doomed and condemned for Schism, and sinful. I wonder therefore with what sincerity the Dr. could say, *They own the thing to be sinful, and yet deny the fact*: Whereas that which they confess to be sinful in the Rule or Principle, that only they deny themselves to have done in fact: And what they confess themselves to have done, they never confessed to be sinful. *There is a Separation that is sinful*, this, say they, we never practised: *And there is a Separation too that is lawful*; and here they own the fact, and deny the sinfulness of it: These tricks therefore will never satisfie his Auditors, nor his Readers; but the Drs. great Repute, and smoothnes of his Style, and a notable talent to misrepresent his adversaries, have made very mean and ordinary Discourses pass for superexcellent; and his name being up, he may lie abed till noon: for so I have heard somewhere of a Cutler's Boy, that was making a knife, and unluckily the steel fell off when he had welded it; No matter; no matter; let it go Boy, said (the Master) my name's up, and my Iron will sell, though not cut better than other mens Steel. And now for a more particular return.

1. *They confess*, that they (three months ago, you must understand that we come not within the Statute) *preach when, and where it was forbidden by Law*, and they have a cause for it: Because they can preach *nowhere, nor time else*, without such conditions as they judge are, and think they have proved unlawful; but they say,

that to preach when *forbidden by Law*, is not *always sinful*: For so did the Ministers of Jesus Christ, even when their Commission was not vouched by Miracles, till 300 years after Christ. And if it be said, that it is sinful in our case, that must be tryed out by no general Arguments and Reasons, but such as are special and proper to the case.

2. *They confess they do worship God, and administer Sacraments, by other Rules, and in other manner than what the present Church prescribes.* If the Dissenters do all this by other Rules, and in other manner than the Assenters do, it will follow unavoidably, that the Assenters do them by other Rules, and in other manner than the Dissenters do; which is the worst that I know will follow, unless he can prove that the Rules by which they worship God, the manner in which they administer Sacraments are nearer then, or as near the Rule and Prescript of the Word, as those of the Dissenters: So that the Question must come to this at last, Whether those Rules *by which*, that manner *after which*, the Church requires to worship God, and administer Sacraments, be conformable to the Scripture Rule of Worship, the Scripture manner of Administration? for if they be, then these Dissenters flatly affirm, That they worship God, they administer the Sacraments by *no other Rule, in no other manner*, than what the Church prescribes. But if they be not, then they say, If they in all their ways of Worship Conform to the *Canonical Rules*, though they do swerve a little from such as are *Apocryphal*, they hope, and believe God will acquit them, as their Consciences now do of the guilt of Schism; and if others will not, 'tis not so much material, because they shall not receive their final doom from the Churches mouth, nor be tryed by her Rules, when they come to be tryed for their All. And by this time we see, and so may the Dr. how much better it had been for him to have follow'd his *Text*, and not to gather Doctrines thence, which never grew there; nor to have so confidently asserted, pag. 9. *The necessity of one fixed and certain Rule, notwithstanding the different attainments amongst Christians*, unless he could have proved it more solidly, of such Rules as Churches make, not contained in the general Rules of the Scripture.

3. Is the Dr. in good earnest? Or is this Rhetorick *pro forma tantum*? Will worshiping God by *other Rules*, and in *other modes and manners* than a Church requires, make such Worship Schismatical? then mark the fatal consequences.

1. It's then apparent, that most of the Parochial Churches in *England*, are *Schismatical Churches*; for do not they worship by *other Rules*, and in *other manner* than the Church prescribes? where is the prescribed Rule for singing Psalms in *Hopkins's* and *Sternhold's* Metre? which yet is universally practised in most Parishes that I have heard of. The Title Page of the *Common-Prayer-Book*, tells us there are contained in it, *the Psalms pointed as they are to be said or sung*; but what Parishes sing according to those Interpunctions? The end of the Book tells us, *Here the Morning Prayer is ended*; and, *Here the Evening Prayer is ended*: And yet when the Church has ended, the Parishes begin, and set up their Notes in those Metrical Versions. Again, what Rule have we for *bowing towards the Altar? the East? the Church?* And yet these *modes and manners* of worshiping God are commonly practised. Are all

all those Parish-Churches which are got into the garb and equipage of the Cathedrals, with Organs, Choristers, and the like, Schismatical or no? If not: Then to worship God in another mode than what is prescribed by the Church, may not be Schismatical Worship; but if it be so, then are those Churches Schismatical, and how then can it be Schism to separate from them?

2. It will follow also, (there's no remedy for it) that either the Parochial Churches, or the Cathedral, are Schismatical Churches; for the former are as much below the splendor of the latter, as the latter are above the rusticity of the former. If there be *two Rules*, one for the mode of Cathedral Worship, another for that of the private Parishes, let them but allow half as much diversity to the Dissenters, and all the pothe and dust, and clamor of Schism will be over.

I would therefore propound one modest Question, Why is this practice of singing *Hopkins's Metre* so universally practised, and yet so little or not at all preach'd against in the Pulpits? *Is it for fear they should have none left to preach to? That is not to be imagined of conscientious and mortified men!* Though it's true, *English Men*, they say, are like your *Irish Cows*, that will not give down their milk kindly, except their Calves stand by; or however, to humor them, the Calves skin stuft with straw: *Or is it lest they should seem to condemn themselves, that make Dissenters Schismatics, for that very thing which they themselves practise?* This looks somewhat oddly, I confess, and the tenderneſs of a man's mind in ſuch a cafe, may, out of meer shame-facedneſs, keep him from declaring a Truth which flies in his face while he speaks it. What can it then be? *Do they fear the reproaches of the People?* I will not determine, but by asking the Dr. his own Question, *How comes it to be Schismatical in ſome, and lawful in others?* Have they two weights and measures? Are the Dissenters Schismatics, for worshipping God by *other Rules*; and the Parish-Churches pious Sons, who *do the same thing*? Or are they resolved that all the World shall be Schismatics besides themselves?

But the Dr. has got a Notion in his head, that these men are unwilling to *confess a Separation*, and he gives us the reaſon of it, because *they have formerly condemned it with great severity, and yet they do the same things for which they charg'd others as guilty of a sinful separation.*

A heavy Charge! & wants nothing but the old thing *Proof*. Is it not a wise course to pretend to give a Reason of nothing? To assign a cause of a thing, before it's clear that there is ſuch a thing in the world? To tell us why they are unwilling, before it appears they are unwilling? *So far as they do separate, they are willing to confess it;* and would he have them confess more than the Truth against themselves? They own that they do not locally hold Communion with all Parishes, at all times, in all the parts of Worship, and this they are ready to prove is not Schism, is not sinful. They avow that they do hold Communion with ſome Parishes in ſome Ordinances, at ſome times, and thiſ, they ſay, will avoid the charge of a total Separation. They ſay, they *never condemned that for Separation in others*, which they practise themselves. How will he evince this? why he has ransacked and rumaged all the *Papers of Accommodation* that paſt between the *Presbyterians* and *Independents*, and there he finds, *That the Assembly of Divines urged their dissenting Brethren to comply with their*

their Rules of Church-Government, and charged them with Schism if they did it not. Well, what then? Were the Rules proposed by the Assembly the same with these that are urged now? Were they of the same nature? doubtful? difficult? What if it was not the *Assembly*, but a *Committee*, a *Sub-Committee*, or a *Subter-Sub-Committee* of the Assembly? What if it was not the final judgment of the Assembly, but the private opinion of that Sub-Committee? And what if we be no ways obliged to abide by their judgments or opinions? And what if the *Presbyterians* were too rigid, the other too stiff in their Sentiments, must the Church only imitate them in their weaknesses, when they had so many excellencies which deserved imitation? And lastly, what if the Dr. has misreported the matter of Fact as there laid down? Any of these, much more all these, will render the most plausible part of his Sermon preached or his Discourse printed, manifestly impertinent. All which particulars, and many more, I shall make out from those very Papers.

(1) The Order of the Lords and Commons, *Die Jovis, Novemb. 6. 1645.* which Ordered the Committee to Act, gives them these Instructions, *That they should take into consideration the differences in Opinions of the Members of the Assembly in point of Church-Government and to endeavour an Union if it be possible; and in case that cannot be done, to endeavour to find out some way how far tender consciences, who cannot in all things submit to the Common Rule, which shall be established, may be born with according to the word:* Here we see a provision designed for *Tender Consciences*, and that before the Rule was established, in case an Union could not be procured, which had it been done in our case, all differences might have been composed.

(2) The Dissenting Brethren say, p. 15. *That they agreed in those things which contained the Substance of the Service and Worship of God in the Directory, according to the Preface, and were confident they should agree in the Confession of Faith;* so that here was nothing but a *Fundatio of Government* about which they differ'd.

(3) The Committee, p. 19. render this Reason, why the desire of their Brethren could not, in *Terminus*, be granted, *Because it held out a total Separation from the Rule, as if in nothing it were to be complied with, nor their Churches be communicated with in any thing which argued Church-Communion, and that more could not be done or said against false Churches, wherein, though they might be mistaken, yet it shews upon what Reasons they proceeded; but the Persons against whom the Dr. disputes, neither plead for, nor practise a total Separation, nor do any thing that may imply the Parochial Churches to be false Churches.*

(4) The Committee, or Sub-Committee had many things to urge, which the Dr cannot make use of against the Dissenters; as 1. *That they were now endeavouring a further Reformation according to the Word of God;* & therefore there was more ground for Hope, more reason for Patience to see what the Issue of their Consultations might prove: And herein perhaps the Dissenting Brethren might be a little too hasty and nimble with them; who knows but matters might have been adjusted to their satisfaction? But things are much otherwise with us. For, 1. They are so far from Re-forming according to the Word of God, that they own it not for a perfect Rule of Reformation. 2. They have taken up their Rest, and will not proceed one step farther,

ther, not to King Edward's beginning, nor Queen Elizabeth's Beginning, much less to what Posture things were in at Christ's Beginning. 3. When they had power in their hands, by His Majesties Commission, to have reformed the *Liturgy*, to have eas'd the People of their Burdens, they would not *abate an Ace* of their Pretensions, but rendered the Terms of Communion more severe and difficult. 4. The Parish-Churches are meer *Miners*, and under *Age*; they move by the Motions of others, cannot Reform themselves, but are strictly ty'd up to the Rubricks, Canons, and Constitutions of the Convocation; so that we have not the same Reason to hope for their Reforming of Worship according to the Word of God. 5. And yet this shall not be any prejudice to them, for if they shall do so, though it were to morrow, or a year, or ten years hence, we stand ready to fall in with such Reformation: And farther, 2. The Committee did plead, That they had both of them Covenanted to *endeavour the nearest Conjunction*, and therefore, for their Oaths sake, were bound to part with as much of their Right as with a good Conscience they could foregoe: But Dissenters are under no such Obligation, that they know of, to endeavour such Conjunction with them who obtend their *meer Wills* to their *Edification*; and some pretend farther, That they are under a *Solemn Covenant to endeavour a Reformation according to the Word of God, in their respective places and stations*, and therefore ought not to comply with any Declensions and Departures from such Reformation.

(5) the Committee were willing, *That some Expedient should be endeavoured, how to bear with Dissenters in the Particulars wherein they could not agree*; But we see no such expedient endeavoured after, nor once thought of, nay declared against, notwithstanding the many *Humble Petitions for Peace* that have been presented to them, notwithstanding *His Majesties Gracious Declaration about Ecclesiastical Affairs*, and the Parliaments Inclinations to shew some favour to tender Consciences; nay they have declared against any Condescensions, and are daily provoking Magistrates to the utmost Rigour, and are like the immovable Bank, to which if the Dissenters will not wholly come over, the Boat and the Bank must never meet.

(6) Such was the tendernes of that Committee, that we find not so much in a dozen Convocations. For first they offer, *That such as, through scruple or error of Conscience, cannot joyn to partake of the Lords Supper, shall repair to the Minister and Elders for satisfaction, which if they cannot receive, they shall not be compeld to Communicate in the Lords Supper, provided that in all other parts of Worship (wherein there was an agreement) they joyned with the Congregation*. . They offer, p. 22. *That such as are under the Government of the Congregation where they live (not being Officers) shall seek satisfaction (as before) which if they cannot receive, they shall not be compeld to be under the power of Censures from Classes or Synods, provided they continued under the Government of that Congregation*. How joyful at, how thankful for such Moderation would thousands of poor English-men be, if they might enjoy the Benefit of such a Canon, to save their Persons from a Prison, their Estates from Ruine, and their Families from Desolation!

(7) The Sub-Committee do readily acknowledge, *That Schism consists not in every diversity of Opinion and Practice, but in an open Breach of Love, and that no Uniform*

Uniformity is necessary to prevent Schism, p. 47. But the Doctor would make us believe, p. 32. That men may please themselves in talking of Peace and Love under separate Communions, but *sad Experience shews the contrary*.

(8) The Committee, p. 48. think the Dissenting Brethren wrong them, in saying *That they make those Impositions upon the people as qualifications for receiving Sacraments*, whenas they desired no more than that the people appeared to be Orthodox: But certainly here's something more than Orthodoxy required of us (even in the judgment of their own Test of Orthodoxy) as a qualification for receiving Sacraments; and we must Submit to the *Sign of the Cross* in the one Sacrament for our Infants, and *Kneeling* in the other, as necessary to our own receiving them, when neither the one nor the other were mentioned by the *Assembly*.

(9) The Committee expressly declare, *they would not have the Dissenting Brethren walk by their Rule farther than as they had attained*: But the Doctor is for the Rule of Severity, waving the great Rule of Charity, notwithstanding the different attainments of Christians.

(10) The Committee profess their Wonder (p. 49.) That their Brethren should impute it to them, as if they arrogated to themselves a power in Ecclesiastical Assemblies to determine and impose circumstantial matters: Seeming, say they, our Pr. position doth mention nothing but *Agreement in Substance*. But the Doctor supposing that we are agreed in the *Substantials of Worship* with him, yet presses us to come to the Churches Rules in those things which they themselves call Circumstantial.

(11) The Committee, p. 49. desires, *That the matters of Offence may be particularly expressed*, professing their earnest desire, as much as in them lay, *to remove whatever may hinder comfortable Communion, that there may be no just cause of Separation*. But the present Dissenters have particularly expressed the matters of their Offence, and cannot obtain a removal of them, neither for Love nor Money; and it's a very hard World when neither of those two Wedges will drive.

(12) And they say farther, *That the Honourable Houses may find out more for Reformation than haply the Assembly have Advised, or themselves yet concluded*, so that they will be willing to be farther instructed in the things that belong to the Churches Peace. But our good Masters have set up their Hercules's Pillars, and Engraven on them *Ne plus ultra*, so that now Hope it self is become hopeless, Patience worn to the Stumps, and all Endeavours out of breath; for after *Cheese and Canon* comes *Nothing*.

(13) Whatever the Altercations and Debates between the two Parties were in the Sub-Committee, yet the Resolve, at last, (which is the main, if not only thing considerable) was this, *Decemb. 15. Resolved upon the question, That they which agree in the substance of the Worship in the Directory according to the Preface, and agree in the Confession of Faith, and with the Doctrine of the Reformed Churches, contained in their Confessions and writings, as we do, who differ from those Brethren in matters of Discipline, shall have the benefit of the Indulgence*.

In short, It may be a plausible, but no righteous Method, to take the Arguments of the Committee, which were only conclusive in the Case before them (and perhaps not there) and to apply them to our present Case, which is quite another thing;

And

And yet when all is said that can be said in this matter, it must be confessed there were undue heats and animosities between the Brethren, both standing too high upon their Pantables, which deserves to be lamented, and not Imitated, and drawn into Argument and Example to justify the inflexible Rigour of the present Terms of Communion.

S E C T. V I I I.

Phil. 3. 15. Considered. How the Doctor rids himself of the danger of the Context. His second Question propounded, and answered like the former, that is, not at all. His Discourse about Conscience examined.

THE Author of the Discourse was very apprehensive that the Context would be urged against his interpretation of the Text, and therefore to save us a labour he has from thence formed an objection for us against his own Doctrine, which we thankfully acknowledge, and accept; whatever may be said (says he) as to other Pleas, for their present practices, my Text (it should have been the verse before it) seems to afford the strongest of all, that men are to be pressed to go no further than they have already attained, and not to be strained up to an Uniformity, beyond the dictates of their Consciences; but to be let alone, as the Apostle directs in the foregoing verse; If any one be otherwise minded, he must be left to God, and that manifestation of his will, he will be pleased to give him.

This Objection to say truth is drawn up with as much integrity as we could well expect: For the Counsel for the Defendant is hardly to be trusted to draw up the declaration for the Plaintiff: One small exception we have against his wording our Plea, and 'tis but a small one: We say not, that men are not to be pressed to go further than they have attained, provided they be only pressed with such Arguments as are proper for the conviction of Rational Creatures: For thus would our Blessed Savior have them pressed, who was the grand exemplar of all moderation and meekness: *Luke 14. 23. Compel them to come in!* *αἰδεῖντες εἰσελθεῖν:* And let tender Consciences be thus compelled, and spare them not; we shall never complain of this force, this violence: But there is a more savage and ferine Method of Compulsion, like that of the Gentleman who courteously invited his poor Tenants to a Christmas dinner by a Bum-bailiff, and Tickets of green-wax, which filled his house indeed with guests, but spoiled all the mirth of the Feast: A Hawk will never make a good sign for a Dove-Coat: We would not have men pressed and oppressed with Club-Logick, as a procedure unsuitable to the nature of Christianity. And now we abide by the Objection; If God himself has given the Indulgence, what man has power to take off the Seal? or why should the

the Church trouble it self and others with doubtful Canons, when they that have not attained to satisfaction about them, have the condescension of God to plead for the suspension of their own Acts, during such dissatisfaction.

Now this knot the Doctor will untie, or cut, or break. And the clearing of it (he says) will give a full answer to the second inquiry, viz. what is to be done if men cannot come up to the Rule prescribed?

But is not this very much about and about the Bush? why should he give himself the needless trouble to enquire so scrupulously what is to be done in case men can not come up to the Rule, when the Apostle has already given us a short, but plain answer to it? namely, that they are to be left to God for farther instruction. But the Doctor is not satisfied with this Answer, and therefore he will answer it in these particulars: Answer it? yes, just as he did the former question, by speaking never a word to it. Had he been pleased to have answered the Question, what is to be done? he should have resolved us, first, What means are to be used to reclaim them that cannot come up? whether fair or foul? Christian or barbarous? whether corporal penalties are to be suspended, or the Dissenters? whether they are to be left in Gods hands, or taken into the Gaolers clutches? Secondly, By whom this must be done, that is to be done? as what they are to do who are dissatisfied? what course they must take to attain more knowledge of Gods mind and Will in that matter, that so they may enlarge their practice according to the improvement of their understanding? Let it not then be ill taken if we put a few questions about this Question.

I. What must they do, to whom a Rule is prescribed by Men about their worshiping of God, who cannot come up to it? And surely if pride and interest had not muddied it, the Answer had run very clear: They ought to examine and try that Rule by the word of God, to beg of him instruction in any point wherein they may possibly be otherwise minded than he would have them: And in the mean time to forbear, for whatsoever is not of faith is sin, that is, whatever a man does, and is not persuaded that it may be lawfully done.

II. What must be done by Church-Governours, if men cannot come up to their establisht Rules? and thus much of the Answer is exceeding obvious.

1. That they had better sit still and do nothing, than rise up and do mischief; Let 'em do no more harm than good, and let them be doing.

2. That if they must needs have more work to do, let 'em be sure they have a Commission from God to do it, lest, while they do what they ought not to have done, and leave undone those things they ought to have done, they make their sins of Commission greater than their sins of Omission. And,

3. They may do well, among all their doings, to consider whether Conscience be not God's peculiar, and so not within their precincts; out of their jurisdiction, and not liable to their citations, processses, summons, and visitations; if they will judge, let 'em be sure they be competent judges: if they will be busie, let 'em beware it be not in alieno foro.

4. If they would know what they must do to others, let 'em first put the case what they would have done to themselves ? Let them do no more at home, than they would have done to them, supposing they were Protestants in *Italy* or *Spain*. It's very useful now and then for great men to put themselves into poor mens circumstances ; (I do not persuade 'em to change places with them, but to put cases) suppose our Bishops had been in Bishop *Ridley's* case when his nearer approach to the fire had thawed his Episcopal Rigor, what would they have done ? would they have magnified the mercy of their own merciless enimies for compelling them to walk farther than they had attained ? or would they have called the Martyrs fools, who upon their ordinary call preached the Gospel, notwithstanding that the laws had silenced them ?

III. It had been much in answer to our expectation, and the question, if he had pleased to have revealed the great secret, *what this prescribed Rule is* ? and this would have been more pertinent, than a discussion of the principle of individualization, *is to the sixt commandement*. As,

1. Whether this Rule be one prescribed by God, in which case no mans ignorance will vacate the rule, though it incapacitate him at present to obey it ; or by man, without direction and warrant from God, in which case, we need no ignorance to excuse us, seeing power to command and obligation to obey, are Twins, both are born, live, and die together.

2. Whether this prescribed Rule, be such as is subservient to some other Rule prescribed by God, or no way useful to that purpose ? we freely grant, that whatever is necessary to reduce any Command of God into Act, and Exercise, may be, must be the matter of such prescribed Rules ; whatever serves true decency and order, whatever tends to edification, to peace, or the glory of God may be fit matter for a Rule, but rules about things no ways necessary to these ends, come not under humane determination.

These things, or somewhat like these, might have offer'd at an Answer to the Question ; but let us hear the Doctor, who, the Reader must observe, is not answering to the Question, but to the *Objection*, which he would perwade us will give a full Answer to the 2d Question, but no man believes it.

§ 1. Then, *This* (says he) *can never justify men in not doing what they lawfully may do*. This, What ? why, *that men are to be pressed to go no farther than they have attained*. This will not justify men ! I believe it will not, it was never intended to justify them, but to restrain their acting, to excuse 'em in suspending their own Act till farther satisfaction ; but it will not justify them ! Before what Judge, before whose Tribunal will it not justify them ? It will not justify them before God, if through supine negligence in searching into the will of God, about *Sin and Duty, lawful and unlawful*, they understand not the Bounds of their Christian liberty, and yet even here the same God who condemns their sinful ignorance, will not have them to give ignorant obedience : But what is this to mans judgment ? who knows nothing more or less of mens negligence than they shall tell him ? But what if he has used all due means to obtain satisfaction in the matters prescribed, and yet

cannot be satisfied, but that either *the things are sinful that are commanded, or the Authority incompetent by which they are commanded, will not this justify him neither?* Then he must be condemned by men, but God will so far justify him, that he shall not be condemned for acting no farther than his own light directs him.

This Proposition of the Doctors he confirms by a Reason: *For (says he) the Apostle makes Communion necessary as far as 'tis lawful, and that upon the general obligation that lies upon all Christians to do what in them lies, for preservation of the Peace of the Church.* This Rule of the Apostle! I find indeed he lays down a Rule that we should *walk as far as we have attained*, but no Rule that we should walk up to the lawfulness of the things, but to what we have *attained of their lawfulness*; lawfulness is not the *measure* of our walking in this case, but *knowledge*. Things may be *in themselves lawful*, but if *only so, and no more*, and a Christian has not attained to *satisfaction* of their lawfulness, if he *walks so far as he has attained*, he fulfils the Apostles Rule, and pleads the benefit of the other to be *left to God's instruction*. But this is the Doctor's method to confound what is *lawful objective*, and what is *so subjective*, as if the Apostles Rule had been, *so far as the things are lawful in themselves, so let us all walk*, when as he only requires us to *walk so far as we have attained* to see their lawfulness: And both the Apostles Rules do suppose that some things are in their *own nature* lawful, which are not so discerned by every Christian, in which piteous case, he commands them to be left to God.

But still he judges, *that the Apostles Rule makes Communion necessary as far as 'tis lawful*. I cannot help that! nor do I see that the Apostle intends to speak any thing of the Communion of Christians among themselves; for such Communion may be had and maintained under very great variety of apprehensions and practices: if Churchmen would once learn to preach up Love, instead of Hatred; and preach down Persecution, instead of Conformity to their own little Niceties. Now to make his Reason carry a fairer face of probability, the Doctor has cleverly corrupted his Text, as he has all along perverted the sense, and reads it thus: *As far as ye have attained walk by the same Rule, Do the same things* which looks very fairly to and favorably upon our dearly beloved *Uniformity*; but he that rides of a trotting Horse, will never spie small faults. *Do the same things*; i. e. Let not one Minister preach with an Hour-glass, when another has none: nor one read Service in his Gown, when the other wears the Surplice. Let not one Christian stand at Prayer, when his Neighbour kneels; but let every man do just the same things that another does, upon pain and peril that shall fall thereon: And all this goodly gear hangs on a Peg that is not worth a Pin, *viz.* the rendering *τέτο περιττόν, Do the same things*. When all the Apostle commands amounts to no more than this, That we should do as he did, *walk as far as we have attained*, and press toward the mark, the *same mark* he aimed at, and leave others to him who delights in *mercy*, more than *sacrifice of his own appointment*, much more than in *Ceremony of mans appointment*, and

and infinitely more than in *Cruelty*, which men have invented to shew their wickedness, but he has forbidden to demonstrate his holiness.

Now what pretty sport would this make the Reader, if the Doctors Answere were in the humor; *Let us all do the same things!* Very good! Will then they do as we do? not for a world! Must we do as they do? By what authority? *Ne audiantur hæc verba ego dico, aut tu dicis, sed quid dicit Dominus?* No more then of this, what they, or we say, or do, but what has God, the impartial Umpire, determin'd between us? Is what they do nearer the Rule? we will do it with them. If our practice come nearer the Rule, are they willing to become conformable to that Rule, though they be Nonconformists to that Rule, which is more remote? Now all the fat is in the fire, and that will make a terrible flame!

These Reasonings the Doctor thinks to blow away with the breath of his mouth, and would perswade us that we have attained already to a satisfaction of the things prescribed by their Rule, and therefore ought, in pursuance of the Apostle's Rule, to walk up to what is so prescribed. *I dare say, (so he goes on) if most of the Preachers at this day in the Separate Meetings were soberly ask'd their judgment, Whether it were lawful for the People to join with us in our Publick Assemblies, they would not deny it.* But there's more cunning in these words, than every one is aware of.

1. I cannot tell what the Preachers at this day would answer, if they were soberly askt the Question; but I doubt they never intend to do that, who put the Question. A sober Question, deserves a sober Answer; and I have heard of a sober, and compassionate Enquiry, that has been answer'd with more sobriety, and compassion, than it deserved: But the Question now, is Snick or Snee? Turn, or Starve? Conform, or Hang? Use the Cross, or bear the Cross? And so we once heard the Doctrine at a Visitation Sermon, *That in vain had the Parliament made Laws to turn the Presbyterians out of their Livings, if men did entertain them in their Houses, and at their Tables.*

2. If the Preachers in the Separate Meetings would thus answer the Question, I should much question their wisdom; for no wise man will answer a Question, before he understands it: But is it lawful to join in the Parochial Assemblies? It may be lawful, and it may not be lawful: It may be so, to join with some Assemblies, and yet not withall: *In some parts of Worship, not in others:* It may be lawful to some persons who judge it lawful (supposing it so to be) when yet 'tis not so to others, who have not attained to such a judgment.

3. I have a confidence contrary to his, That if most of the Preachers in the Separate Meetings were asked their judgments (whether soberly, or madly) about the lawfulness of joining with the Parochial Churches in all the parts of Worship, or in any Exclusive to their joining with other Assemblies, where the Gospel Rule is more strictly observed, they would flatly deny it; and let these Men be brought to the Poll, I question not but they will carry it; and I suppose though the Doctor preach in the Chappel, he never took the Poll of the Nonconformists in *Guildhall*.

4. Let the Question be put, Whether the People may lawfully separate from those Churches whereof they are regularly Members, and from those Pastors under whose Ministerial conduct their own free Election has placed them, to joia ordinarily and constantly with any other particular Churches, and they, according to Reason and Scripture, will answer in the Negative.

And now the Doctor has *supposed* what he pleases, let him but now infer and surmise what he pleases too, and the day is his own.

(1) He infers, *If the Ministers judge it lawful, why do they not preach it in their Congregation?*

Answe. 1. They do not preach it, because they do preach it? that is so, far as they judge it lawful, they either preach it, or print it; or partly preach, and partly print, as the Doctor did by his own Discourse or Sermon.

2. Some do not preach at all, because Christ has found them other, and better work to do, than to preach up Ceremonies, wherein they themselves not being satisfied, are very unfit to give satisfaction to their people: And if we should tell the people *how far they are bound to comply with an establisht Rule*, at that rate the Doctor has answer'd the Question, we should leave the people as wise as we found them.

(2) The Doctor falls a guessing what should be the Reason they do not preach this Doctrine to their people; why they keep it such a secret in their breast.

1. He conjectures it may be for fear they should have none to preach to; a vain conjecture, since they that preach most often, and open *how far it's lawful to conform*, have the most numerous Congregations.

2. He conjectures it may be lest they should seem to condemn themselves, whilst they preach against Separation in a Seperate Congregation; that cannot be it, for they that are *locally separated* from all Congregations, may consistently preach against Schismatical Separation from any.

3. He conjectures it may be *They fear the reproaches of the people?* Nor that either! for they that judge their duty so to preach, so to write, do it without reproach of the more temperate, and fear not the reproach of them that are otherwise. But why do not our Diviners, and guessers at other mens corrupt intentions preach against the Notorions Crimes of those that are their hearers? are there none but Dissenters there to be railed at? have they none that live in open Adultery? none that are Common Drunkards; that for time of need could piss out a scare-fire? is it for fear they should have none to preach to? or for fear they should have no pulpit to preach in? or be silenced, and not Permitted a Tongue to preach? or is it lest they should *Condemn themselves*, whilst they preach against the crimes of others? or do they fear the reproaches of the people, that they are *half Presbyterians, semi-fanaticks, perboyled Puritans?* I think its time for men to have done with these *evil furnishings*, we have something more concerns us to judge of, than other mens heart: when the Doctor preacht to his auditory in *Gods name*, yet he should not have kept into *Gods throne*; but have left *the thoughts, and intents of the heart to him, before whom they are open, and Naked.*

I shall not here call over the Doctors particular insinuations, which are so subtilly laid, that they do the mischief, and instill all the poyon of a false accusation, but yet escape before men the charge of it: only I take notice of one thing: *Is it not (saies he) as plainly written by St. Paul, If I yet please Men, I should not be the Servant of Christ; as, Woe be unto me if I preach not the Gospel?* It is so with *equal plainness* by the Apostle, and with *equal impertinency* by the Doctor, and with *equal justification* of the Nonconformists: for they dare not please men to the displeasing of Christ, both which they would do, by *scrilegious Desertion of their Ministry*: but Christ's displeasure is not to be compensated by mens *good will*, nor his love to be forfeited for fear of incurring their *ill will*: And on whole side the temptation *to men pleasing* most lies, the impartial world will judge though we be silent.

§ 2. His second particular is this: *If the bare dissatisfaction of mens consciences do justifie the lawfulness of separation, and breaking an estblisht Rule, it were to little purpose to make any Rule at all:* And to speak my mind freely, unless the Rules that have been made in some Countries were to better purposes, I know not to what purpose they were made at all; these Rules have made the world so irregular, and unruly: What their purposes were that made the Rules, I shall not enquire, but what we see or may say, the event of them for many Centuries has been nothing but either *blind obedience* in the most, or *necessary separation* in the rest: And much better that all these Humane Ecclesiastick rules had never been made; than to be made of such sinful materials as must divide us, such dubious things, as will perplex us, or by such persons whom God has not authorized to Command us. But his *proposition* I must except against upon these following grounds.

(1) I shall not say, *It is no distinct proposition* from the former, being only a *Reason of it*; nor that he might have found in his own discourse twenty more propositions if this may stand for one; but only make my exceptions.

1. This proposition like most of the rest, is of an uncertain sound. First we know not what mystery there lies in, or may lurk under that Term *Bare dissatisfaction*. For this word has haunted us all along through the discourse; Barely Congregational. p. 30. Bare suspending Communion. p. 20. Barely relating to acts of worship. p. 17. And now at last *Baredissatisfaction*. If he means no more than such dissatisfaction, as has no fair realon for it, that perhaps will not justify any man, in any thing he does, or does not: but there is a dissatisfaction, well cloath'd with decent and *Comely presumptions*, that the thing it's dissatisfied about is unlawful, and it may be with *probable arguments* too, though it wants such demonstration, *cui non potest subesse falsum*. And this will justifie, if not *positive separation*, yet *suspension of a mans action in positive Communion*.

2. *If bare dissatisfaction* will justifie our *not acting* (which is all we plead *bare dissatisfaction* for) there is another thing that justifies our *Communion* with other Churches where we may enjoy the *Ordinances of Christ* without such dissatisfaction: and that is the *Command of God*, which has made it our express duty.

to walk in the ways of Gods appointment. So that if *dissatisfaction* tye us up from joyning in one place; *peremptory Command* will enjoyn us to joyn in some other.

3. This *establish Rule*, that fills up both pages of his Sermon, is an equivocal t'rn; for such a Rule may be lawful, or unlawful according to the matter of it: If the matter of it be things *unlawful*, there needs no *dissatisfaction* of conscience to justifie separation from it, or the violation of it, the will of God has already determined that point: If it be *lawful*, and conscience be *dissatisfied* about it; conscience will tie up from acting according to it, though not oblige to act against it.

(2). His Proposition is tardy too, in respect of the Reason he gives to back it. Because (says he) *it is impossible to make any [Rule] which ignorant and injudicious men shall not apprehend to be, in something or other, against the Dictates of their Consciences.* But let *knowing and judicious men* make the Rules, and there will be less cause for *ignorant and injudicious men* to break 'em: They that will make Rules about indifferent things, had need have more than an indifferent Judgment, more than an *ordinary Wisdom* to accommodate them to the measure of Knowledge of those for whom they are made: And in this case Rules should not be made as men make Tobacco-Pipes and Glasses, on purpose to be broken. Tradesmen indeed cannot live if their Wares were Immortal; but are Church-men more afraid their *Tickney Rules* and *China-Canons* should be preserved than broken? It were better the whole Fry of Apparitors, Summoners should starve than live upon the new-made Sins of the people. But *ignorant men will apprehend these Rules against their Consciences*: Let then Rules be made for the *knowing and wise*, and leave the poor ignorants to live and grow wiser, rather than knock 'em o'th' head because they want Brains. But thus it was, thus it ever will be, whilst men will be establishing their own *Rules of Severity*, and neglect the *Rule of Charity* given them by the Spirit. Rom. 14. 3. *Let not him that eateth, despise him that eateth not, nor him that eateth not, judge him that eateth*; which was a Rule made upon as good Advice as any of those made by any Church at any time since.

Let then the Doctor please himself with his seeming Advantages from the Papers of accommodation, we need say no more than,

1. That the case is hugely wide between what the Committee, or Sub-Committee there required of their Dissenting Brethren, and what the Bishops now require of the people in order to an Union.

2. That his Inferences are not fairly drawn from their Expressions.

3. The Assembly and their Committees were but men, subject to the like Passions with their Brethren, and therefore,

4. That we are not obliged to vindicate every expression which in heat or haste drop from their Pens, nor to be concluded by their Determinations, which, with what has been before observed upon this subject, is enough to blunt the edge and break the back of the Doctor's Arguments drawn from their Concessions;

sions: And yet I cannot forbear a particular examination of some of them, for a taste of the rest.

(1) *Though tenderness of Conscience may justify Non-communion in the thing scrupled, yet it can never justify Separation:* That is, he that has the Church-doors lockt upon him must stand there cooling his Toes, and never address himself to others that are open, for fear of Mr. Hales his *Scare-Crow*, Separation. But for Answer,

1. We produce *Tenderness of Conscience* for no other use than to *justify Non-Communion in the things that are scrupled*.

2. We produce the *Authority of God* to justify our Obedience to all his Commands, Statutes, Judgments, and instituted Worship.

3. We produce plain reason from those premises to justify our Churches: For if tenderness of Conscience will justify us in *Non-Communion*, and God's Command justify us to Worship him according to his Revealed Will, we must of meer necessity separate from a Church where we cannot have all the Ordinances of Christ, to another where we can.

4. We say, The Doctrine of the Sub-Committee, *viz.* *That such tenderness of Conscience as ariseth out of an opinion (cui potest subesse falsum) which may be false, is not a sufficient ground, &c. to justify Separation;* and that of the A. B. Laud's, who would have all Dissenters produce such Arguments for their Dissent, require more Evidence than our Learned Doctor will allow for the *Existence of a Deity*.

This Point, by the way, I shall a little examine, because I find it asserted in some of the Doctors *Staple-Discourses*: I shall not cite his *Irenicum*, because he has put that Piece amongst his Tracts that are to be retracted, and seems weary of his *Weapon-Salve*, and will now trust only to his *Weapon*. His *Rational account* is not yet amongst his prohibited Pieces. Now, p. 178, 179. He thus expresses himself, *It is a piece of great weakness of Judgment to say there can be no certain assent where there is a meer possibility of being deceived; for there is no kind of assent in the human understanding, as to the existence of any thing, but there is a possibility of Deception in it.* And p. 206, 207. He calls aloud to the Papists to come forth with their *infallible Arguments to prove the existence of a Deity*, before they talk of an *infallible way of proving the truth of Religion*: And surely the Dissenters are not more rigidly obliged to prove the lawfulness of their Separation, nor the sinfulness of the Terms imposed on them, by Arguments which cannot possibly be false, than all Mankind is to produce such infallible Proofs for the existence of the Godhead.

Nay, further by what I can gather from the Doctor, he seems to proceed upon such principles, as plainly render it impossible by any certain Argument to prove the existence of a Deity. *Orig. sacr. p. 230.* where,

1. He lays down this for a principle: *That the foundation of all certainty lies in the necessary existence of being absolutely perfect; so that unless I know that there is a God, I cannot be assured that I know any thing in a certain manner.* Now then if all certainty doth suppose the existence of a being so absolutely perfect, I must, before I can know

any thing certainly, conclude that there is an infinity of knowledge, wisdom, power, and goodness in this God.

It then God be the *first knowable*, and that it's impossible to know any thing certainly, Except I first know such a being as God, how shall we come to prove his existence by such demonstration *enī non potest subesse falsum?* shall we demonstrate a God *a priori?* what cause shall we find of him, upon which, and from which our demonstration may be formed: without *a cause*, we cannot demonstrate *a priori*. And supposing *a cause*, we suppose him to be *no God*: Shall we then proceed *à posteriori*, from the Effects to the Cause? The Apostle would have gone this way, *Rom. 1. 20.* And from the creation of the world, have demonstrated his *eternal Powr, and Godhead*; but the Doctor has shut the door, because we must first know there is an *invisible God*, before we can certainly know there is a *visible world*.

2. How then will the Doctor prove there is a God? why, he tells us, *Orig. sacr. book 3. cap. 1. p. 367, 368, &c.* We must have recourse to an Idea, *A settled and consistent Notion of a being that is absolutely perfect, not (as he says) that there is any such connate Idea in the soul, but that there is a faculty in the soul whereby upon the free use of Reason, it can form within it self a settled Notion of such a being, which is as perfect as it is possible for us to conceive a being to be.* Well then we must form a Notion of God from the *Use of Reason*: But seeing that all the processes of Reason are from things *known to unknown*, or from *more known to less known*, where shall we place our engine? where shall we fix the first foot of the compass? where must Reason begin? must we begin with the perfections of the Creatures, to argue our selves into a belief of that God that made them, and therefore must need contain all their perfections in himself? this is that the Doctor has renounced; for we must first be sure there is a God, before we can be sure there is *any thing else*: I would begin with a *Fly, an Aunt, a Mushroom*, and from thence I would gradually climb up to the *first Cause*, but the Doctor forbids us; for we have no assurance that there is such a *Fly, Aunt or Mushroom*, till we are first assured of a God: Must we then leave this way of reasoning, and search for something *before God, Co-ordinate with God?* the danger is, lest that which is *before God*, should prove the *true God*, or if any thing be *Co-ordinate with God*, there will be *two Gods, or none*.

Now this being once the judgment of the Reverend Doctor, and confirmed by him in his Dialogues, p. 269. wherein he appeals to his *Orig. Sacr.* for this very thing, I hope they will never more expect fuller proof for the warrantableness of our Nonconformity, than they require to prove the existence of God; and let them beware, lest whil'st they trample upon Conscience, where God has his Throne, they do not fight against him that sits thereon, and so bring Heaven and Earth about their ears.

2. Another thing collected is, *That it's endless to hope to give satisfaction to tender Consciences*; and therefore they resolve never to begin. And is it not as endless to give assent and consent to the Impostions, for who knows where they will end?

end? By the same Reason they have imposed these, they may five hundred, but if the Distemper be endless, why should not the Remedy? The Apostle *Paul* gave satisfaction to tender Consciences, without ever fearing it would be endless. Men are for endles wealth, but not for endles trouble. Can any man think the primitive Christians had only a Lease of the Rule for Indulgence, during the Apostles Lives, and that they must Fine for it smartly, when the next Generation came up. How much better had it been to have been left to restraint, and absolute will during the Apostles times, with a reversion of liberty after their decease, than that the 14th Chapter to the *Romans*, should be like the Ceremonial Law, to expire with the Apostles, and be buried in their Graves? There Will be honest untaught Souls to the worlds end, whom Christ thought not too bad to redeem ; and whil'st there are such, the Church, unless She will be a Shrew, or Stepmother, must take a tender care of them: But if it be so endles to satisfie the erring Consciences, leave 'em to God, he can do it ; and he will either forbear them, in their ignorance, or give them Knowledge, whom it might become those men a little to imitate, who call themselves his servants.

(3.) *That Scruple of Conscience is no protection against Schism.* Who says it is? It's only a Prohibition to afford Communion in what we scruple: Except when the things scrupled, and not scrupled, are so blended together, that we cannot swallow what appears lawfull, but we must gorge that with it which appears otherwise ; which has been the policy of some modern Imposers, so artificially to mix the certain and the uncertain, the questionable with the unquestionable, that these scrupulous Consciences cannot enjoy that wherein they are satisfied, except they will venture at that about which they are not so ; so are *Private Bills* fitch'd with the *Publick ones*, that the more usefull may sell the other, which few else would regard: So have I seen idle Matters delight themselves to see their Children play at Bob-apple, where the poor young Rascals would have been glad of a Bit, but were always prevented by the Candle.

(4) *That the Apostles, notwithstanding the difference of mens judgments, did prescribe Rules of Uniformity.* Well but mark their proof ; Did not the Apostles bind the burden of some necessary things on the Churches, albeit there were in those Churches gradual differences of light? And will the Doctor infer hence a power to bind unnecessary burdens upon the necks of Disciples, because the Apostles imposed such as were necessary? The Argument then concludes ; If the Apostles, who were infallible had power to impole *Necessaries*, much more may the Prelates impose *Unnecessaries* though they be fallible. But of these things thus much.

¶ 3. Come we now to his third and last Proposition, *A wilful Error or mistake of Conscience, doth by no means excuse from sin.* These things surely are oddly joyned together ; that a *wilful Error*, and a *mistake of Conscience*, should be made the subject of one Proposition : There may be a *mistake of Conscience*, where there's no *wilful Error* ; *wilfulness* makes every Error double, obstinacy being added to it ; but a *mistake of simple ignorance*, makes it not half so great, though it makes it not to become *nothing* : it may excuse à *tanto*, though not à *toto*, and mol-

life it a little, though not justifie it, nor nullifie it.

It will not excuse from sin! And yet p. 44. he moves this Question, *What Error of Conscience doth excuse a man from sin, in following the dictates of it?* If no Error will excuse, why is the Question put, *What Error will excuse?* And if some Error will excuse, why is the Proposition laid down so loosely, and uncertainly? *A wilful Error or Mistake will not excuse from sin.*

And upon this proposition, he makes a case. *If a man think himself bound to divide the Church by sinful separation, that separation is nevertheless a sin, for his thinking himself bound to do it:* which is one of the wildest cases that ever was put. For, 1. It may be justly questioned whether it be possible for a Man in his wits to think himself bound to divide the Church by sinful separation? A man may think himself bound to separate; and that separation may possibly be sinful: but he cannot think himself bound to sinful separation. He that is bound is under a Law; He that thinks himself bound, thinks himself under a law: but it implies a broad contradiction, for a man to think himself bound to sin: because that implies, that he thinks himself bound not to be bound; or under a law to be under no law. A sort of men there are that think it lawful to tell a Lie, to avoid a great evil, to procure some great good. Yet none ever owned this principle that it was lawful to sin, to procure the one, or avoid the other: but they pretend that to tell a Lie in such a case under such circumstances is no sin. 2. I very much question whether ever any did think himself bound to divide a Church: he may possibly think himself bound to avoid it, but how should such a crotchet come in's head that he was bound to divide it: when the Church of England separated from Rome, did they think it their duty to make divisions in it? 3. The instances that he gives are short or wide of his case by many leagues: *Paul thought himself bound to do many things against the Name of Jesus:* He did so, but not to do one thing that was sin: The Jews thought themselves bound in Conscience to kill the Apostles: True! but yet they thought not themselves bound to kill them sinfully: they wanted not pretences to justifie the cause to the world, nor untemper'd mortar to daub over their own Conscience; 'twas easie to say they were rebels against traitors to the Emperor: An easie thing to cry out of heresie, and schism, and sects every where spoken against; nor wanted they a Tertullus who before the Magistrates and Judges could accuse Paul for a pestilent fellow, a mover of sedition, and a Ring-leader of a sect: so that all the world sees and the poor dissenters feel the Truth of what the Dr. says, *men may do very bad things and yet think themselves bound in conscience to do them:* 4. Its freely granted by all the world, that *wilful error* (that is, *Interpreatively* such, for no man can formally err willfully:) *does not excuse from sin:* that is, what God has prohibited, no mans error can make a duty; what God has commanded no mans error can discharge him from obedience to it. Nor do we, or ever did we make Conscience a stalking horse for these ends.

And thus we have got through the three famous Propositions, that should have cleared up the objection, and so answered to the the second Question: but what are we edified by all this discourse? or how do we understand either what we, or

Church

Church governors *must do*, in case we or others *cannot come up to the establisht rule*? men are not justifiable *in not doing what they lawfully may do*: well but if they see not that *may be lawfully done* which may so? must they be left to God or no? *wilful error and mistake will not excuse from sin*: be it so! still *what must be done, when men cannot come up to the establisht rule*? I confess, I am just as wise as I was! but this is the *Genius* of the Sermon: He propounds an enquiry. p. 15. *How far the obligation doth extend to comply with an establisht rule*? He shuts one thing out of the Question, then a second thing out of the Question; then excludes a third out of the Question, and at last shuts the Question out of doors, and it goes wandering up and down like a vagabond to this day: we never heard *one rule* to limit it: how far we are *not bound*; nor one assertion to explain it, how far we are *bound*, but as far as a man may conjecture by the Hum, and buzz of the discourse; we *be bound to comply to the uttermost extent with every establisht rule*: again, p. 36. He enquires, *what is to be done if men cannot come up to the establisht rule*? And he neither acquaints us, what we are to do: nor *what the Magistrates are to do*, nor *what Church governors are to do*, nor *what the Rule is*, nor *who made it*, but lays down a first, a second, a third proposition, and the Question is gone for *Jamaica, or Tangiere*, and fare it well!

But yet under this last proposition, there are some things contained which really deserve our most serious Consideration. As,

§ 1. He Infers from hence, that *men ought not to rest satisfied with the present dictates of their consciences, for notwithstanding them they may commit very great Sins*. Much lets then *ought men to rest satisfied with the present dictates of other mens wills*, for notwithstanding them they may commit very great sins. Conscience is more my rule then the dictate of any Church: and if I ought not to rest satisfied with that which God has made my *next and immediate guide*, I may the more lawfully examine their commands, which are *more remotely such*. But I wonder what he would have men do? would he have us like the wandering Jew, ramble up and down for satisfaction, and never accept it? or to be *always learning, and never coming to the stable and settled knowledge of the Truth*? or *proving all things, and never holding fast that which is good*? Must we be of the Pyrrhonian Religion, *Academicks, Scepticks, Seekers*? or shall we for two or three years be of *no religion*, that we may be more Impartial in our Enquiries which is *the True*? There is something considerable in what the Dr. says, if he had made it out: If the *Dic-tates of our Conscience brand such a practise for evil*, which the generality of sober, pious, and knowing Christians recommend as lawful, or a duty. It will become us to be jealous, least any base lust have bribed our judgments to pass a false verdict upon that practice; and so in many other Cases, but in the mean time we must restrain, and not act contrary to our present sentiments; and if there be any practice which appears to me to be a duty from the Scripture, in which I have found the presence of God with me, and the blessing of God upon me thereby; I shall study to be more confirm'd in it, and *rest satisfied with my present dictates about it*, till some remarkable thing awaken me to a jealousy, that

Its not so clear a matter as I have supposed it.

§ 2. But the Doctor is afraid (and so am I) that the common mistaking the Case of an erroneous Conscience hath done a great deal of mischief among men. I wish he would state it better then, next time, lest the next Edition alter the Title, and call it the *Mischief of mistaking the Question!* But where does the mischief on it lie? Oh, the Question is generally put, *How far an erroneous Conscience doth oblige*, and if they that propound it in those terms, answer it as the Doctor did the other, *How far we are bound to comply with an establisht Rule?* It had better never been stated nor started than thus answered.

To come a little nearer to him! Is the Doctor sure the Question is thus generally put, *How far an erroneous Conscience doth oblige?* I am very confident, its oftner put, *whether it do at all oblige or no?* And they generally determine in the negative, *Conscientia erronea, ligat, sed non obligat.* It ties a man up from acting, or may urge him to act, but can neither oblige him to do what God has forbidden, or to omit what God has made a duty. *The former* because we take the voice and command of Conscience to be Gods voice, and he that is prepared to act against that dictate, though it be not the voice of God, yet shews he was really prepared to have acted against it, if it had been so: And though it be the will of God we should do what he has commanded, yet 'tis not the will of God, we should do it with a reluctant, and tergiversating Conscience: *The latter* because there can be no power supposed to be given by God against his own Laws; Nor King, nor Keyser, nor Kirk, nor Conscience can make that *lawful* which God has declared *sinful*, nor render that *indifferent* which God has made a *duty*.

And therefore after all this ostentation of Casuistical learning, the Nonconformists are perfectly unconcern'd, further than to clear what he has perplexed in this matter, and in short they say. 1. That *A mistaking Conscience will tie up the Person from acting*, with this difference, that where the thing is a duty, which Conscience dictates to be sinful, he ought to *refrain his act*, but yet is not *guiltless in the sight of God*: but if the thing be *in it self indifferent*, Conscience does not only lay an embargo upon him, and commands him not to stir one step, one foot further, but will justify him in the Aporetick posture, against any power on earth, to whom he never gave a power to perplex Conscience so far as to make that sin, which in it self is indifferent, and Conscience judges sinful. 2. They say, that where conscience dictates any thing to be *sinful*, which God has made a *duty*, though this erroneous Conscience will not discharge the Soul from the duty, yet the measure and degree of that sinful forbearance is to be taken from, 1. The diligence or negligence which the mistaken person has used to procure satisfaction in the mind of God in that particular. 2. From the frame of heart towards God in other cases and particulars, as whether he makes Conscience of obeying God those things, which he knows to be duties. From the continuance in that omission: for the affirmative Precept of God, which has made *doing the thing* my *duty*, though it alwayes obliges, yet does not oblige alwayes to be doing it; and therefore a Conscience, which chains me up from duty for a day or week, when per-

perhaps in that revolution, the duty may not recur, is not of such guilt, as that which fetters me up from acting for such a time, wherein the duty has offered it self frequently to my observance: I say 'tis not of such guilt. I dare not say 'tis of no guilt; because the ineptitude of the soul to have done it, if it had recurred in that season, may be culpable.

3. They say an erroneous Conscience can never make that to become either lawful or a Duty, which God has declared to be sinful: Because the Authority of God is greater than that of Conscience, and can never in any Case be superseded by it. And because *negative Precepts* alwayes bind, and bind to forbearance at all times and in all Cases (except there be a relaxation in the Law it self, which in such *Negatives*, whose matter is not of its self, and in its nature evil, there may be) so that what God has made sin, so far as he hath so made it, the soul is tyed up for ever from doing it.

4. They say that an erroneous Conscience may so perplex and entangle the Soul with its interfacing dictates, either urging it to refrain as *sinful*, what God has made a *duty*; where to refrain is sinful, because God has made it a *duty*; and to *act* is sinful because Conscience represents it as *unlawful*; or pressing to act where God has declared it to be sin; in which Case to act must needs be sin, because God has prohibited it: and to refrain is sinful, because Conscience tells the Soul it must act: And I know not what such a miserable Creature may expect, Except first, That God may pity it, though erroneous, if sincere; For sincerity is more in the sight of him who desires truth in the inward parts than Orthodoxy: and he sees the general frame of the heart to be upright, because it would omit nothing which it takes to be duty, though in the application of the general frame of heart to this or that particular practice it may be o'er it molt wretchedly.

2. That men ought exceedingly to pity an erroneous Conscience, both because they may need the same commiseration, they may be tempted, they are of the same frail Constitutions, and obnoxious to the like infirmities, but especially if that error do visibly arise from an evil Constitution of body, being naturally melancholick, or from evile education, where the Error has been suext in with the Mothers Milk, or the general prevailing of some erroneous principle in the Age which has tinctured and misled Conscience, seeing its much more easie to scoff, jeer, and revile at an erroneous Conscience than to direct, inform, and heal it. And none are more unmerciful censurers of a mistaken Conscience, than they that never knew the worth of a truly tender Conscience of their own.

When therefore the Doctor tells us. That *Conscience alters not the Nature of good and evil in things*, that *what God hath made a sin, or a duty remains so, what ever a mans Conscience doth judge concerning them*: He brings us no new discovery; no extraordinary revelation, but that common doctrine of all Casuists; all the fault of it is, That its impertinent to the matter in hand, for he is or should be inquiring what Power Conscience may challenge about an *establishit Rule of Mens making*; and such for which they have neither general nor particular warrant from God, so to make.

§ 3. The Doctor informs us, *That the most material question in the Case of an erroneous Conscience is: What error of Conscience doth excuse a man from sin?* which was seasonably remembred, since p. 42. He layes it down as a Rule, *That willful error or mistake doth by no means excuse from sin.* If a mistake will by no means excuse, I wonder what error or mistake can do it? He answers by an approved distinction, between *involuntary Error*, caused by *invincible ignorance*; and *wilful error*, when the judgment is formed by *passion, prejudice, interest*: Now that which I shall take notice of here, is only the explication of his terms and Notions.

1. *An Error wholly involuntary*, is when its caused by *invincible Ignorance*, or *after using the best means*, for *due information of his Conscience*: Thus the Doctor has determined, and thus we afflume: But the Errors of the dissenters (if they be errors) in not complying with the controverted matters, are *wholly involuntary*, caused by *invincible Ignorance*, not being conscious to themselves that they have neglected the *best or any good meanes* for the better information of their Consciences; They have read the Scriptures, they have studied the controversies, as they have been stated by learned men both in the beginning, and progress of the reformation; they have managed *friendly*, and *unfriendly debates*, conferences, disputations with men of all persuasions; they have earnestly prayed to God not to suffer them to be mistaken in a matter of so great moment, they have implored his direction, what he would have them to do or suffer, and see no reason hitherto to alter their judgments or practises, and therefore hope the Doctor will become their security against wilfulness of error; and that *their Act, though it may be a fault in its self* (which yet they do not believe) *shall not be imputed to them as sin.* And now whereas formerly they would have been content, that any *Act of theirs, if erroneous*, might have been pardoned in the number of their sins of ignorance, upon a general repentance, though there had been some guilt in it; The Doctor has exceedingly obliged them, and to their singular comfort assured them, that *their Act (so qualified as before) shall not be Imputed to them as sin*: So that things are somewhat better with them then they looked for, and they will returne the Doctor their humble and hearty thanks, for his good Doctrine, which makes them need *no Absolution*, where there is *no imputation*.

I only adde, that whoever pleads for mercy and Indulgence to an erroneous Conscience (if honest and upright) must be presumed to do it Impartially, and can be no Interest of his own, for no man can Judge his own Conscience to be actually Erroneous; which plea ought to be accepted with Readiness by all the Sons of men, since no man can be absolutely certain but he may have at least in some particulars an Erroneous Conscience: Nor yet will this destroy the distinction of *voluntary*, and *Involuntary Error*; for though no Error is *formally voluntary*, yet may it be so by *Interpretation*; that is, though he that mistakes in any point of Doctrine, doth not, cannot willingly erre, yet may he have contrived that error by such sinfull courses, that God will charge the guilt upon him as if he had willfully run into any other sin.

(2.) Let us therefore in the next place, hear the Doctors explication of a *wilful*

ful error of Conscience. If (says he) they form their judgments rather by passion, and prejudice, and interest, than from the laws of good or just Rules of Conscience; if they do not examine things fairly on both sides praying for Divine Direction; if they have not patience to hear any thing against their Opinion: but run on blindly and furiously, in so doing act according to their Consciences, and yet be in as great danger of committing beynous sins as St. Paul and the Jews were, which Doctrine of his being true in the main as it lies in *These*, will need the less of animadversion upon it: yet must I say. 1. That his disjunctive; [If they form their judgements rather by prejudice, then from the laws of God or other just rules of conscience] insinuates a piece of their Modern Divinity, *viz.* that there are other just rules of conscience, than Gods Law, which is a Notion we cannot admit of without better evidence: we would gladly know where those other just Rules are to be found? must we seek them in Canons, and Constitutions Ecclesiastical? whether then are all such, or only some of them such just rules? If only some of them: which are they? and by what characteristical marks may we distinguish them? but if all be so; then must we acquiesce in all the Canons, decrees, rescripts and Rules that were ever made by any Counsel or convocation; and why then did not the Church of England rest satisfied with those rules, which were given her before the Reformation? 2. We must needs say, that if the Dissenters do examine things fairly on both sides, praying for Divine Direction, and have had a world of patience to boot, to hear any thing against their Opinion, though never so weak in Reason, and strong in passion; (which they profess before the searcher of all hearts they have done, and continue still to do,) they must be discharg'd before all the world that shall take cognizance of their cause, and hear their p'cas, of any wilful or voluntary error: And for the suggestion that they form their judgments from prejudice, passion, and interest; they dare not judge of other men, contenting themselves to have averred their own innocency, when the temptation visibly lies on the other side.

§. 4. For a Conclusion: The Dr. would apply the charge of a wilfully erroneous Conscience to the Dissenters. If men (says he) through the power of an erroneous Conscience may think themselves bound to make schisms, — to disobey Laws, to break in pieces the Communion of the Church, they may satisfie themselves that they pursue their Consciences, and yet for want of due care of inforsing themselves, those actions may be wilful, and damnable sins. But we think not our selves bound to any such wickedness; there are now, that think themselves bound to do that without our assistance; now besides us to perpetuate the cause of our divisions, and to entail contentions upon innocent Posterity, whose teeth must be set an edge with the sour grapes their Fathers have eaten; but if any shall think themselves bound, through the power of an erroneous Conscience to make unjust rules of Conscience, when 'tis impossible they should make one *de novo* that is just, and thereby break the Church in pieces, they may think what they please, that they are pursuing their just rights to impose upon other mens Consciences, and satisfying their own, and yet for want of a due care to inform themselves better in their duty, the extent of their power, and the ends for which it was given, be guilty,

guilty in the sight of God of wilful and damnable sins, as bad as those of the *Jews*, who thought they did God good service, -when they persecuted and murthered his faithful Servants.

S E C T I O N I X.

A Consideration of those Assertions of the Doctor. If Communion with the Church be *lawful* it will in time be judged a *duty*. And, if Occasional Communion be *lawful*; it's hard to understand that Constant Communion should not be a *duty*.

I Find the Doctor ever and anon insinuating, that what is *lawful to be done*, upon some account or other *ought to be done*: which if it be *universally true* will take away the difference between *merely lawful* and *necessary*, at least as to use and practice, since it implies that whatever is *lawful* may be made *constantly* and *fixedly a duty*: If it were only asserted, that what is *merely lawful* might through a concurrence of circumstances *pro hic & nunc*, become a *duty*, as it would do this cause no service, so neither would it meet with our opposition: But to be thus laid down in general without further explication, needs a little consideration, and so in this case, that which otherwile had been but *lawful*, will be incumbent on me as my *duty*. Two expressions I find worthy our Notice:

1. *I do not question, but in time if they find it* (Communion in Prayers and Sacraments) *lawful they will judge it to be their duty*. Now because we have ever thought, that what was *lawful and merely so*, stood in the midst between *sinful* and *necessary*; forbidden and commanded, it deserves some care and pains to dive into the mystery of it, how, or why these lawfules may become determined to one side of their extremes or terms, between which they formerly stood neuters. And by what we can gather from his discourse, it must be one of these things.

2. That, whatever we judge *lawful* to be done in any case, *for peace sake* will become a *duty* to be always done. For he tells us, p. 31. 32. *There's nothing Christ and his Apostles have charged more upon the consciences of Christians, then studying to preserve peace and unity among Christians*: To which purpose the Doctor quotes us several places of Scripture, which it is needless here to repeat, seeing none ever yet denied the study of peace to be a very great, and manifest *duty*. But if it be *charg'd on the Consciences of all Christians to study to preserve peace*, We hope they find the charge upon their Consciences also, [for they are *Christians*] Have they then studyed the things that make for peace? I mean not *their own*, but the peace of all the Christians in the Nation: A little study would have discovered the *means*, had they been as they pretend such passionate Lovers of the *end*. What expeditors have they then found out by all their study, or what expeditors will they accept that others have studied, and found out, to relieve and procure *peace* so far as its lost? to *preserve peace* so far as it yet remains? and to further *peace* so far as it may be attainable in the *Imperfect state* of this life? what will they part with to purchase it; will they step over one straw? remove one stumbling block that lies in the way of it? will they wave the least of *their pretensions*

or

er condescend to others in the smallest of their desires? will they promise to reforme our Rubrick, that one Rule for finding out Easter for ever, when it would not find it out for, but proved it self Erroneous in, almost half seven years? will they forbear to exact our Assent and Consent to a known falsehood for that excellent thing, which they so much predicate, Peace? The matter is slight! yet if an Error, they can more easily forgoe it then we avow it: We know not why we should tell the smallest lie for peace, if they will not part with one: Nay tell us what thing so Inconsiderate, so minute, which all our humble Petitions for peace could procure the relaxation of? And yet these are the men that boast themselves highly of their burning zeal for peace! To be an Advocate for peace is an office of good credit, but I cannot tell what to think on't; when I am pres-
sed so earnestly and heartily to feed lustily on that Dish, of which my Inviter will not taste: but the Doctor and the Reader will expect other Answers, and that whatever becomes of others we do clear our selves: 1. Then, we will acknowledge that what we can lawfully do, we ought to do for peace sake, When peace will certainly be obtained from them, by doing what we can lawfully do: but if the doing all we lawfully can, will not be accepted as the condition of peace, to what end should we stretch our selves, and strain our uttermost powers to reach that which can never be reacht? I will part with much of my right, deny my self in what I may lawfully do, to buy my peace at the hands of a vexatious Neighbour; but if all that I can lawfully do will not purchase it, *Its better saved than ill spent*: For an Indifferent thing, that becomes good, as it tends to a good end, will yet be no good thing again, but return into its old box of indifferents, when it tends not to that good end: Nay that which is in its general nature a duty, as relating to such an excellent end, yet ceases to be a duty, nay becomes a sin, when its applied to no such end. *An oath* is a part of worship, and so far a duty; the end of an assertory Oath is to put an end to Controversies, to procure peace among men: but if an Oath of that sort be used where it cannot put an end to the controversy, it becomes sinfull, as *taking the name of God in vain*. 2. We acknowledge that what we lawfully can do for peace sake, that we ought to do: But withal we affirm that we actually do it, and do it as our duty to; for suppose I find it lawful in general to hear a sound pious Conformable Minister preach the Gospel; when circumstances meet together to call me out to go, I do it under the strict Notion of duty: And they that find it lawful to Communicate in the prayers, and Sacraments, and the Church, do judge they are doing a duty in such Communion: There must then be something else that the Doctor would have, if we could get out the secret; which his next Magisterial assertion perhaps may discover: 3. They that judge it lawful, nay their duty to hold Communion with the Church, in prayer and Sacraments, yet neither think it their duty nor lawful to joyn with one Church to deprive them of the lawfulness, and duty of joyning with other Churches: least whilst they presse after positive duty, they should neglect a Comparative duty: for seeing they judge it a duty to joyn with the parochial Churches for peace sake, and to joyn with other Churches also for the same end, they shew a more true and Catholick Spirit for a general peace amongst all Christians,

then they whose Narrow straight-laced Souls, only design a peace within the limits of their own Constitutions. And, 4. If it be true, that what we may lawfully do without sin, we ought to do as our duty; why may not others turn the inference thus; That seeing its lawful to joyn with the separate Churches without the guilt of schism, it will be a duty also so to joyn: for these that think the one lawful, think the other lawful also: and as the argument holds on one side, it will hold on the other with equal force. Nay: 5. *With more*; for those persons against whom this argument is brought from their own judgment of the lawfulness of joining do judge it a more clear case, that its lawful to join with those other meetings, which are more near the word of God, in worship and discipline, and where the dubious Conditions of Communion are not found to raise scruples about the lawfulness of Communion with them, which in other places cannot but sometimes occur. Nor will those external, accidental advantages, which one side has got above the other vary the case, seeing 'tis the intrinsick merits of the cause, that conscience regards in forming a right judgment about its duty. And let thus much serve for an Answer.

(2.) Yet I rather think, there's a further meaning in his words, which we poor heedless, sleepy Creatures little dream of: *I do not question, but in time, if they find it lawful they will judge it to be their duty.* In time? yes! all in good time! that is, when they have preach'd up the Magistrate to a due height for persecution; and alarm'd the Nation with another Presbyterian Plot; or retrieved that of *Ax-yard*, and the Meal-Tub; when they have rallied up the who'e Legion of Informers, and once more given us a specimen of ecclesiastical Grace in driving us out of our houses into prisons, *then is the time*, when we shall all find it a duty to conform. I have no great Reason to be confident of my self, and, I hope, I know my own heart a little better than to trust it, nor can I tell whether one terror may not make me think that *Lawful*, which I never so thought before, and the next make me think it a duty; a man is ready enough to stretch his Conscience rather than an halter; there's no such *feeling conviction*, like that of the Statue; nine and fifty dull arguments and one *sharp sword*, will create a good title to the seventeen Provinces: It may be then in time we shall find it a duty, that is, a duty not to God, or our Consciences, but to our Carcasses, and other duty upon this account is not yet discovered.

(3.) But the most probable intendment of this Paradox is: That if we find such Communion lawful, the intervening authority of the Magistrate will turn the scale, and make it a duty: To this I shall not need to say much, because so far as we judge Communion lawful before the Command of the Magistrate, so far we do judge it to be a duty under due circumstances, and no further can we judge it to be either lawful or a duty, when the Magistrates command has had its most operative influence, either upon the things themselves, or our Consciences, yet these things we take to be clear. 1. That where Communion with the Church would have been sinful under all its circumstances, no command of the Magistrate can make it lawful. 2. That no command of the Magistrate can discharge a Christian from that duty which he owes his proper Pastor, or that

that particular Church whereof he is a member according to Gods Word. 3. That the Magistrate has power from God to enforce all his Christian Subjects to live peaceably among themselves, and punish them that do otherwise, but not to destroy that for which Peace is desirable, namely the leading a quiet and secure life in all godliness and honesty, for he is the Minister of God to us for our good, and not for our ruine, 13 Rom. 4.

§ 2. A second uncouth passage of the Doctors is that of page 56. *Its hard to understand if occasional Communion be lawful; that constant Communion should not be a duty*: I perceive he is somewhat hard of understanding, especially of those things which he hath no mind to. In the former discourse he argues from the *lawfulness* of Communion to the *necessity*: but here also from *occasional* to *constant* Communion. To which confident assertion of his we Oppose this, *Occasional* communion with a particular Church may be *lawful*, when yet *constant* *fixed* *stated* Communion may not be a *duty*, which we prove. 1. From their own Doctrines and practices. Their Canons have made it the duty of every individual member of their Church, to hold constant Communion with his own parish Church and Teacher, and yet they allow *occasional* Communion with other parish Churches. A journey will make occasional Communion with a remote Congregation *lawful*, but they will hardly perswade us that they can make it *our duty*, to take such journeys in order to such communion: If the great Bell rings at the next parish to a *Lecture Sermon*, or chimes all in to *Divine Service*, when we have none of those at home, 'tis lawful to take the occasion without coming under a constant obligation to it: The dissenters crave the same equity; they say they are under an obligation ordinarily, fixedly, stately, constantly to worship God in those congregations whercof they are members, they say they can readily joyn with other congregations as they have opportunity, but they cannot admit the inference, that because they may *occasionally*, that therefore they must *constantly* practise it: because *Acts of worship* have a larger extent then *Church relation*; those may be performed and yet these remain sacred, and inviolate. 2. Some *conforming Ministers* and Christians judge it lawful to hold communion *occasionally with the dissenters*, in prayer and preaching; what a rare argument has the Dr. furnished us with to prove it their constant duty; and from *once bearing lawfully*, to prove it an *incumbent duty* to hear them for ever? 3: It may be lawful occasionally to step in, and hear a very weak preacher, perhaps one that is vicious in his life, or unsound in some points of Doctrine, when we can hear no other, will it follow that we are bound, or that any power on earth can bind us to hear such constantly, when God has made better provision for our souls, and we want only grace to accept it? 4. How many have judg'd it lawful to go to a play or the Chappel at *Somerset-house*, *occasionally*, who yet think that twenty *Acts of Parliament* cannot make either of them a *constant duty*? 5. And how unwilling are most men to be argued into *duty* from the mere *lawfulness* of the thing? The Dr. thinks it *lawful* to resign one of his preferments to some worthy person that has none, and yet his own argument will hardly convince him 'tis his *duty*: It seems

very lawf^{ul} for him that is almost melted with *two coats* to part with one to his brother that's almost naked, and yet we despair of success in thus arguing with him: Nay it were well if some men would be perswaded that *plain duty*, when it crosses worldly interest, is *duty*, and we should the better bear with them in denying every thing *lawful* to be the *duty*. And, 6. If all *lawful things* may be converted into *duty*, and what is *occasionally indifferent*, may be turn'd into *constant necessity*, then farcwl *Christian liberty*, and let man hereafter eternally mourn, or dance to the Musick of his fettters.

S E C T I O N X.

Of terms of Communion required by the Church, whether upon the same Reason that some of them are Imposed, the Church may not also impose some Use of Images, Circumcision, and the Paschal Lamb?

WE hear every day eloquent Orations in praise of Peace and Union, smart declamations against separation, but we seldom hear of the *fatal terms* which obstruct the one, or may justifie the other: I shall not tire the Reader with a tedious enumeration of the particular conditions, but shall content my self to have named *One*, though I discontent some others that I have *no more*, and some will find themselves aggrieved that I have named *that one*: It is the use of *the sign of the Cross in baptism* which I intend, and have therefore singled out *that one*, because it is number'd amongst the *three innocent Ceremonies*, and because tis imposed both on the *Ministers* to practice it, and the *people* to dedicate their Children to God by it.

(1.) And here I ask what Reason can be assigned for the use of *this sign*, as it signifies *Christ's cross*, and *him crucified thereon*, as it is the symbol of a persons *dedication to Christ and his service*, but what will equally justifie the Religious use of *a crucifix* set up in the Church for the same use, and purposes?

This sign of the croſs is instituted by the Church. Firſt as a *memorial of Christ's cross*. Secondly, as a *Symbol whereby a person is dedicated to him who died the death of the cross*. Thirdly, as a *token that he shall not be ashamed to confess the faith of Christ crucified, and manfully to fight under his banner against sin, the world, and the Devil, to continue Christ's faithful servant and soldier to his lives end*. That these are the ends and uses of that sign, is exprefly owned, by the *Canons of 1603.* and the *office of baptism in the Liturgy*: Now why the image of Christ upon the Croſs, or a *Crucifix*, may not be used for these ends, upon the same Reason, nay upon *somewhat better reason*, we are yet to ſeek: for if a sign may be used to these ends to make impression upon our minds of those spiritual truths, duties, and mercies, the *fixed visible Image* will much better do the work then the *transient, and scarce visible sign of a croſs made in the Air with the finger*. That the Papists do use the Image of Christ upon the Croſs as an *immediate*, though not *ultimate object of Adoration* is true; and it is as true, that the Church of England does not use the sign of the Croſs, nor is it by us charg'd to use it for that end: but

but yet, as there is an inferior use of the *Crucifix*, to be the *Laymans hornbook* to teach him to spell out a *crucifie Christ*; and a *Covenanting use*, to initiate *Converts* in the profession of the *Gospel*; and an *obliging use* to engage them to serve their *Redeemer*; so there can be no solid reason given why such lower uses of an *Image or Crucifix* may not be introduced, but what will equally militate against our use of the *Cross*.

2. What Reason can be alledged why *circumcision* may not be imposed as a term of *Union* or *Communion*, to signify the *circumcision of the heart*, as well as the sign of the *Cross* to signify *faithfulness and perseverance* in the service of Christ? To the *Jews* indeed it was a badge of their duty to *keep the whole law*. Gal. 3.4. And such use would now be apparently sinful, but suppose it were enjoyned for no other end than as the *surplice* to denote *purity*, kneeling at the *Sacrament*, to signify *humility*, the sign of the *Cross* to represent *courage, and constancy*, so this *circumcision* to stir up our dull souls to consider of the *circumcision of the heart*, what greater *superstition* in this, then in those? Especially when the *Apostle* has given our fruitful invention such fair hints, *how apt* it is to be drawn into significativeness. 2 Rom. 29. *Circumcision is that of the heart*. Nay when he openly avows, that Christians are the *circumcision*, 3 Phil. 3. upon which mystick grounds the Church of *Abissi* practises this Ceremony to this day. It is confess that in the Church of the *Jews*, circumcision had a *typical use*, which is now unlawful to be retained, as a denial that Christ is *come in the flesh*. But as we have, or pretend to have scraped and scoured away the *idolatrous and superstitious* uses of those ceremonies which we borrowed from the *Romish Church*, why can we not purge away the *Judaical use* of Circumcision too, and borrow one poor Ceremony at least from that Church, as well as the other from Rom:?

3. What reason can be given why we may not together with the *Lords Supper* use a *Roasted Lamb with bitter herbes*, not to signify Christ to come which was the *typical use*, but Christ already come, and slain, which is the *Symbolical use*; since the *Apostle* has given us a hint for that also; 1 Cor. 5.7. *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*: The Papists who understand well how far their principles will lead them, have not scrupled this use of it, for granting them a power to impose outward visible signes of inward and invisible grace mercy and duty, what should hinder them from turning the *Paschal Lamb* into a *significant Ceremony*? *Monsieur Lortie* in his *Treatise of the Supper*, part. 1. c. 6. b. Informs us that the *Greek Church* upbraided the *Roman*, that formerly they never used the *Supper* upon *Easter day*, without a *Lamb*: And he quotes a good Author for his voucher. Mr. *d' Autenil*. Who thus informs us. *Sugar reports how that Pope Innocent the 2d, being at the Abbey of Saint Dennis, upon an Easter day, after all things were prepared according to the order of the Roman Church, he sacrificed the most Holy victim of the Paschal Lamb, and when the Miss was ended they then did eat that material and real Lamb*. And why not? if the Church may judge what is decent, orderly, edifying, fit to teach, and stir up the mind of man by some notable signification, and *Impose* what it so judges to be, as a *term and condition of Communion with her*, what

what should hinder her to proceed, and bring in the *Paſchal Lamb* too; for, *the more the Merrier*; and (which ſeldome holds), *the better cheer* also.

SECTION XI.

The Application. And first, *To those in Communion with the Church.*

Nothing now remains, as the Doctor thinks, *but application*; and perhaps it may be ſo, nothing for us to *Read*, because we have read all the rest; but upon my word there remains a great deal more, for the Doctor to do than he as yet done, unleſs he can ſatisfie himſelf to have dene juſt nothing: Here are ſeveral Propositions to be proved, his own *Questions* to be answered, and many things upon the ſcore not wiped off; yet let us hear his *Application*, which is alwayes either the beſt or the worſt part of a Sermon.

He begins with a word of Advice to those *That continue in Communion with the Church.* *That they would walk by the ſame Rule, and mind the ſame things.* For *whiſt we keep to one Rule all people know what 'tis to be of our Church.*

Here then are *two ſorts of Persons*, both ſuppoſed to be in Communion with the Church: First *The Super-Conformiſts*, who out-run Canon, Convocation, Rubrick, and are got as far as *Calice* before ſome of their Brethren can reach *Canterbury*. The ſecond of *Subter-Conformiſts*, who jogging on their own pace, neither the high-trot, nor the Tantivey, are almoſt run out of diſtance; the former are for the high Notion of Canon-Prayer, the other form their own *Concep-tions* in their own expreſſions, in Prayer both before and after Sermon; theſe again are ſo ſtiffe in their Hams, they will not bend at the naming the word *Jesus*, but others are ſo ſupple in the joynts, they are already to buckle at the name of *Judas*: Some are got into the high ſtrains of the Organ, above Canon, againſt Homilies, others content themſelves with the plain ſong of the old Metre, and from hence. 1. *Quere* whether *Super-conformity*, and *Subter-conformity*, over-doing the Rule and under-doing it, excelleſſes, and defectſ in refe-rence to the fame Canon, be not a real Schiſm in the bowells of the Church?

2. *Quere*. If ſo; which faction is it that makes Schiſmatick? If the Galloperſ, why are they not then declared Schiſmaticks from the press and Pulpit? Is it for fear they ſhould loſe ſuch zealots from their party? or are they afhamed to condemn others, for what they practice themſelves? or is it because theſe Sinners are *too good, too bad, or too great to be told of their faults*? But if the halting Conformiſts be the Schiſmaticks, how comes it to paſſ that only *defectiſ* are Sins, and yet *excelfiſſes* are ſuch vertues? why is it, that a man may advance towards *Rome*, and yet be no Schiſmatick, but yet one ſtep, towards *Geneva* make him a damnable one; that it would be no crime to *out run* the Conſtable, but to *hang back*, and give him the ſlip, when he would drag him to the Stocks, is ſucha heinous one?

Quere 3. Whether if they can relax the Rule of Severity, or exerciſe the Rule of Charity towards their own brethren, to ſave them from being Schiſmaticks, they might not ſtrain a little farther to ſave the reſt of the Nation?

Quere

Quere 4. If it be true, that ~~while~~ all keep to one Rule, all people know what it is to be of the Church of England. Mr. B. will not be as far to seek, as ever he was to understand, what the Church of England is; when he cannot but see by men's practises, they either walk by no Rule, or Twenty; and when a punctual Conformist neither exceeding, nor coming short of the Rule, is like that *Temperamentum ad pondus*, which unless in some Philosophical Noddle, never yet had any real existence.

Quere 5. If (as the Doctor says) it be *Indiscretion* only, and some *peccadillo*, to g^o bynd the Rule, a good nature might not allow it to be *Indiscretion* too, and no more, in thole that fall below the Rule? It may be demonstrated, that ten degrees of *Northern Latitude* varies no more from the *Equiⁿixe*, thin as many degrees of *Southern Latitude*: But the misery is, *Titus* shall be a *Saint* for the same thing for which *Sempronius* is a *Rascal*; and let him fly never so high above the Canon, he's but *indiscreet*; when as let him lag never so little behind it, he's a notorious Schismatick.

Nevertheles Conformists must own it to be wholesome counsel which he gives them and himself, *Let us take heed we do not give too much occasion to our enemies, to think the worse of our Church for our sakes.* Most excellent counsel it had been, had he defined critically what *occasion is too much*, what *too little*, and what *just enough* to make men think evil of the Church. And his o'd Qu^ostioning method might have here been seasonably revived; *How far we may, or may not give occasion to enemies, to think worse of the Church*: but we never expect an Answer of these hot-scalding questions: *occasion* may be given, and *much occasion*, but *too much occasion* must not; for *too much is too much*; and therefore whatever that may be, take head of it.

This advice was first design'd for those that continue in *Communion* with the Church; but by some unhappy accident or other, it's turn'd into a *word of reproof*, nay of *reproach* to those that are out of it. In times of common infection, they say, all diseases turn to the Plague; and in the universal paroxysm of railing at *Dissenters*, even *Sermons* that should be *Remedies*, turn into the disease of railing: But what have the Nonconformists to do with the *Exhortation* given to the Conformists? even as much as the Doctor had to do to preach against them at *Guild-Hall Chappel*. But let us hear their crime however; *They blame* (says he) *the Government*; *but if themselves were in place, or those they love or esteem, then the Government had been a very good thing*: *thus do mens judgments vary as their intrechts do*. As if a *Weathercock* should preach from the top of the *Steeple* one day, *Whit Charter has Christ given the Church to bind men up to more than he has done?* *Iren. Epis. p. 8.* And the next day should tell us, that *what is lawful may be made a duty*; and then I am sure the Church has power to bind us up to more than Christ ever did: yet it seems, if the Nonconformists might have been all made Bishops, they had liked *Episcopacy* well enough; for my own part, I like it so well, that where there's one Bishop, I wish there were five hundred; and yet I have heard of some that might have worn the *Miter*, but that they would not purchase *repentance*.

Penance so dear : But he goes on ! We find uniformity and order condemn'd as tyrannical, till men come in place themselves, and then the same things are very good : Where the Doctor found this, except in *Panciroll de rebus perditis*, I cannot imagine ; I never heard Uniformity condemn'd as tyrannical : but the rigorous forcing of Christians to an affected uniformity in humane crotchetts ; an uniformity in practice, without uniformity in judgment. If all mens feet were of the same size, I should never complain if their shooes were made of the same Last : but to pinch a foot of the slovens twelves, into a shooe of the Childrens threes, is to put Conscience into the Shoo-makers stocks, which next to those of Bishop Bonners Colehole, are the worst one can sit in : Nor do we abhor order, but innovations introduced under that specious title ; Nor did I ever find that the Non-conformists were in the Bishops Thrones, though some odd fellows got into their Lands ; without which, perhaps neither one side nor other would be very ambitious of the places.

Let the Doctor then take an occasion, or no occasion, little or great, to revile us ; to misrepresent us, I am sure his brethren are beholden to us, for by our means they have escaped a fine scowring ; and the edg of that Reproof which seem'd to bear hard upon the Conformists, is turn'd directly against us, which the Doctor might have forborn for two Reasons ; the one, that there were none out of Communion with the Church to hear his Juniper-Lecture ; and the other, because he promised to read them their lesson by themselves, which they now are expecting.

S E C T. XII.

The Doctors Considerations considered.

HE that had scarce half a word to those in Communion with the Church, who were present, has for those that are out of the Churches Communion, though at the time absent : First a Squadron of Considerations ; and secondly, a Pacquet of Advices. His Considerations are now to be considered, which are precisely four.

(1) The first thing we are to consider, is *How many things must be born in the Constitution of a Church?* A world, no doubt, in some Constitutions, by those that are ambitious of their Communion. Now that we may not be in arrere in Civility, we humbly desire all those whom it may concern to consider 1. What our consideration will signifie, unless we had a Commission of Terminer as well as Oyer ? If we might bear what we could, and forbear what we could not, it might be worth the while to consider what must be born : but if the Imposers will consider what they please to lay on our shoulders, and we have no consideration left us, but whether we will bow or break under the burden, what place for consideration ? 2. We desire it may be considered also, what may be forborn by them, as well as born by us ; and that in order to Peace and Union : but it's plain, they are all for our bearing, and nothing for their own forbearing ; which yet had been more

more proper to his Text, had he considered that it is the will of God that they that have *not attained* to the same strength, should not be charged with the same burden. 3. It ought to be considered also, how many things may *not be born*, as well as how many *must*; for when the intolerable are removed, we shall the better bear the rest; but if we must bear *either all, or none*; to what purpose is our Consideration? 4. We have considered again and again, both the *tolerabiles & intolerabiles Ineptias*; which I English the *tolerable and intolerable unfitnesses*, and know not how to bear either of them. And 5. it's more our interest to consider how we may get strength to bear the *diplesure of the Imposers*, than the *load of the Impositions*, seeing we could easily avoid the one, if we could but escape the other. 6. We desire it may be considered a little, that there are different degrees of strength in Christians, all have not the same Bajulatory backs, nor the same Herculean shoulders; and therefore it might become Church-Governers to sit down and consider, whether it be agreeable to the mind of Christ, that the weak should bear the imperious passions of the strong, and not the *strong bear the infirmities of the weak*, Rom. 15. 1.

(2.) The Doctor would have us consider, *how impossible it is to give satisfaction to all*. We have considered that too! and hope he will consider whether there may not be found a *medium* between *giving satisfaction to all, and to none*. Methinks this might satisfy all, if they that are so zealous for Ceremonies might have their belly-fulls of 'em; and they that are more indifferent for 'm might not have 'm cram'd down their throats. He was reputed a wise Country Justice in his time, who satisfied all his Neighbours contending about the old Ceremony of *Cbsuers Ale-stake*, and determined it thus: Neighbours! you that are for a *May-pole*, shall have a *May-pole*; and you that are for *no May-pole*, shall have *no May-pole*. Christians that have out-grown their Juvenile-vanities, can be satisfied with *a worship adorned with Gospel simplicity*; but if any *must* have a better, let the Children be satisfied, rather than bawl and disturb the family.

But the Doctor would have us consider further. *How many things must be allow'd a favourable Interpretation? how many things must be born? how many things must be allow'd a favourable construction?* I fear they are *Sans number*. Now if our interpretation might stand for *Authentick*, and they would allow us to add *our interpretation to their Text*, this were something. In the mean time, let them be pleased to consider, whether a more favourable Interpretation ought not to be put upon the principles and practices of Dissenters, without wresting, vexing, torturing them to a sense beyond, and against their intentions? And further my it please them to consider, whether a more favourable interpretation ought not to be put upon their own Constitutions: for it cannot be expected that any should interpret them favourably, if they themselves Interpret them rigidly: And the execution of Laws and Canons will tell us what construction they put upon them that best understand 'em. It cannot be hidden what an Interpretation has been made of the Statute against *Popish Recusants*, to torment poor Protestants, who are brought within the *lash* of it, though out of the *Reason* of it. And lastly, we

humbly desire it may be a little better considered, that the Imposed matters are in *their* judgments indifferent, in *ours* sinful, which is like the *Quid si?* to an Atheist, that can never be answered: And seeing (as the Doctor says) *something will be amiss either in Doctrine, Discipline, Ceremonies or Manners* (he might have added, *or in all*) that they who have the power in their hands, would either rectifie what is amiss, or however not compel others to comply with what they themselves confess to be so.

(3.) He would have us consider, *How Separation of the people from our Churches comes to be more lawful now, than in the days of our Fathers?* But had it not been more becoming a rational Divine first to consider, *whether it be so or no*, before it be considered *how it came to be so?* Many men are so hasty, they leap over the stile before they come at it. 1. Then, Separation was as *lawful then*, as 'tis now, had they seen with our eyes; and as *unlawful now*, as then, if we law with their eyes, I mean the eyes of Conformists; for such are they who are produced against us. And what an odd argument is it to quote them for our Fathers, who were their own Grandfathers? 2. It would be considered whether the Separation of former times was not much greater than that of the present time, for they proceeded to set up their *Presbyteries*, their *Synods*, their *Provincial* and *National Assemblies*, formed themselves into separtate bodies for Government, and were soundly smok't for it in the high Commission. 3. And yet if in any respect the Separation be greater now than it was then, it is because there are more severe terms put upon the Pastors of Churches; and they being remov'd from the Benefices, the Flock did not judg that a sufficient discharge from, nor dissolution of their relation, and therefore adhered to their true and only lawful Pastor, and by consequence a Separation followed: Nor were the Ministers of old haggled off their legs with a quarter of the Oaths, Subscriptions, Declarations, Renunciations, that now they are; and they that took such care to throw the Pastors out of Churches, must be responsible to Christ, if the people follow'd them. And in those former days there was much connivence and Indulgence exercised towards the Nonconformists in some obscure places, where lay no temptation to *square Impedit*; but we have intended the matter, as *sowre Ale does in Summer*.

(4.) Lastly, He would have us consider, *The common danger that threatens us all by our divisions*; which if some late Preachers had well considered, they had never blown up the sparks of persecution against Protestant Dissenters; we are willing to consider the *common danger* that threatens us by our *Divisions*; Are they as willing to consider and remove the Causes of the Divisions which heighten the common danger? If the danger be *common to both*, why is not the *security* so too? Must the Dissenters only be in danger on all hands? Wise men, that can foresee a *common danger*, should not destroy one half of their friends, that the *common enemy* may with more ease destroy the other. The first Conquest Rome made of Britain, was by this error of the Natives, *Dum singuli pugnant omnes vincantur*; and we heartily wish that in their next attempt, they proceed

not upon the encouragement of the same *Maxim*. In which Devastation, though all are like enough to share in the *common misery*, yet their share of the sin will be the greatest, that would hazard every thing, rather than part with any thing: that would lose the Horse to save the Saddle, or perhaps one hair of the Horse's tail. They that are such admirers of *Unity*, and will yield nothing to procure it; and have such apprehensions of *Popery*, and yet will do nothing to prevent it, must presume strangely of the strength of their Rhetorick, or think meanly of the weakness of our Reasons, if ever they hope to Proselyte us into the faith of it. As for *Dissenters*, how vigilant and active they have been against the Designs of *Rome*; how Cordially they have espoused the common English Protestant Interest, without regard to their private pretensions; how zealous they have been for His Majesties Person, Government and Interest, let others speak, we shall be silent.

S E C T. XIII.

The Doctors Pacquet of Advices, Advised upon; with some bumble Advice to himself and others. The Conclusion.

THE Advice to those in Communion with the Church, was short and sweet, but the Dissenters shall now have it by *Winchester* measure.

§. 1. And first we are advised, *Not to give encouragement to rash and intemperate zeal*. We thankfully take his advice, and humbly return our own; *Not to give encouragement to rash and intemperate Railing*; whether he gave, or his successor took without his giving, any encouragement, to let fly at *Meroz*, to vomit up a whole Pulpitful of *Gall*, we must not determine; but if the *quatuor tempora*, four times a year, or so, would serve their turn to revile us, we could be content; but this intemperate railing grows very tedious. That *Gregory Nazianzen* seldom saw any good end of *Councils*, we easily believe, and have therefore the less hope of *Conversations*; for my part, I observed nothing more in the Nation, than an universal tendency to mutual love and forbearance, till that of late some fearing we should be too happy, beat up the *Pulpitdrums* to awaken drowsie persecution.

§. 2. He advises us *not to be always complaining of our hardships and persecutions*. That's, I confess, somewhat a hard chapter, to be *always forced*, and never *allow'd* to complain: Let them either take away the *cause of Complaint*, or our *sense of the cause*; and we shall either not need the advice, or quickly take it. To vent inward griccs in outward exprecions, is some little relief to an oppressed heart, that must either breath or break: but thus passionate Mothers sometimes whip the child till it cries, and then whip it for crying: which a blunt great man once exprest in more slovenly phrase; To beat a Dog till he flinks, and then beat him for flinking: which had never offended the Readers ears, if the Doctor comparing the Separators to *Dogs*, p. 7. 8. had not warranted the Decency of the expreision.

Nor yet do we *always* complain of our hardships, nor with uncivil reflexions,

nor at all of *our Prince*, in whom we might be compleatly happy, if some insinuators did not intercept his Royal Propensities to Grace and Mercy.

How easie is it for them that are at ease, to read Lectures of patience to those inmisery ! thus we advise the poor sick patient to patience, and gravely reprove his sighs and groanings. *Omnes Confilium facile agrotis damus.* And thus the keepers of the *Inquisition* pity their wretched prisoners ; telling them they do ill to complain of their hard fare, since a spare diet is more for the health of them that want of air and exercise : thus did *Julian* answer the complaints of the *Christians*, That he had taken away nothing from them, but what was *a hinderance to spiritual race*, and now they might more easily thrust in at the narrow gate, when he had stript them of the worlds cumber : but to pinch us, and then command us not to feel, is to chew the bullet, that the wound may be incurable, the anguish more intolerable. We will not say with *Job*, chap. 16.v.4. *If your soul were in our souls stead we could bear up words against you* ; but this we may, that seeing he will neither allow us to *lay down* our burthens, nor *complain* of them, we will allow our selves to complain of our sins, and when we are discharg'd of those, we shall bear other loads the better.

¶ 3. We have this *Advice*, *Not to condemn others for what we our selves have practised, and think to be lawful.* 'Tis good counsel. Nor do we remember that ever we persecuted our brethren for *non compliance with our inventions* ; nor, that we know of, did we ever silence two thousand Ministers at one clap for scrupling our modes of worship. The heats and animosities of Brethren ought to be bewailed, not imitated ; and though they have not silenced each other for trifles, yet the wise God to take down their stomacks has chosen they should suffer by others hands and not their own.

But the Doctor turns his *Advice* into *Accusation*, and draws up a Charge against the several sorts of Dissenters from *their own practices*.

(1.) And first he must be supposed to begin with the *Presbyterians* : *Who contend even at this day for the obligation of a Covenant, which binds men to endeavour after uniformity in Doctrine, Discipline, and Worship.* I will add the words following, — according to the word of God, and the example of the best Reformed Churches. And will they condemn the Doctor for such a Covenant ? Uniformity they plead for ; and Uniformity they plead against, and yet without any shew of contradiction ; for it's another Uniformity they plead for, than that they plead against. If *T. G.* had advised the Doctor *not to condemn the Papists for what he himself practises* ; not to condemn them for worshipping God, when he worships the same God ; his answser had been ready : we worship, and you worship the *same* God, but not with the *same worship*. And so from his own answer he might have answer'd himself. The great rule we own is this : *In necessariis unitas, in Adiaphoris libertas, in utrisque charitas.* Let unity (and if you will Uniformity) be kept in necessaries ; in non-necessaries, liberty ; in both charity.

(2.) The *Independents* must have a touch too, for their severity in *New England*, where, as he says, *They made it no less than banishment for the Anabaptists to set*

set up other Churches among them: That is, they banish them to their own homes in Old England; we desire we may suffer no worse banishment here. But yet the news is very bad if it be true; but we suspect all stories from thence ever since the great Archdeacon licensed the Legend of one Mr. Baxter baptized in his own blood by the *Anabaptists* there, for which his Doctorship came upon the stool of repentance; but supposing the information true, he must first weigh all the circumstances of it, before he can justly condemn them, and then show that we practised the same thing we condemn in others.

(3) He has a fling at the *Quakers* too: *Who notwithstanding the single independency of every mans light within, have found it necessary to make rules and orders among themselves to govern their societies, to which they expect an uniform obedience, and allow no liberty out of the Power and the Truth.* And let them expect it, so long as they do not *exalt it*: I am confident those persons will not condemn the Clergy for their highest expectations, if they would forbear their rigid exactions. I see then plainly some mens dealings are harder than their arguments: *Uniformity* may be good; who imposes it, is not much considerable, all the controversie lies, what the matter of which it must consist, what the rules by which it must be enjoined, ought to be.

§ 4. His next advice is, *Not to inflame the peoples heats by making their differences with the Church of England to appear greater than they are.* They that complain of other mens heats, ought to cool their own; but thus the *Torrid Zone* may send a Pacquet of Advice to the *Temperate*, *not to inflame the peoples heats.* They that *make the differences*, not they that *make 'em appear*, are the dividers; nor have we made 'em appear greater than they are, though some have made 'em greater than they need be: If we preach this Doctrine to the people, that the *Parish Churches* are *true Churches*, they will never believe us, so long as they believe the Doctor, That one Church, one Altar, one Baptistry, and one Bishop (in his sense) were of the same extent and latitude; and all the rest but *Occasional Meetings*, pag. 27. and if we should preach to them, that if *Occasional communion* be lawful, *constant communion* will be a duty, they would but laugh at us, and perhaps we should smile a little at our selves: That the Dissenters have (as the Doctor says) *some little interests of their own*, is very true; little, very little interests they are, but if he will thence conclude, they prefer 'em before the honour of Christ, and the peace of the Church, he may give proof of his great understanding, but not his conscience. In the mean time the Doctor might have done well to suspect his own great interests in the world, before he had reflected on their little ones.

§ 5. Another branch of his Advice, is, *Not to harbor, or foment unreasonable jealousies in peoples minds concerning us*: i. e. *That we are not hearty and sincere in the Protestant Cause.* To this I only lay, I shall never hereafter entertain one thought that the *Church of England* is marching towards *Papery*; for since I read this Sermon, and the definition of the *Church of England* therein, I despair of ever knowing who or what the *Church of England* is. *Pope Pius* the fifth used to say, when he was a *Bishop*, he was pretty sure, when a *Cardinal* he began to

Am't, but when Pope he absolutely despaired of his salvation. I have sometimes thought it easie, of late I found it hard, but now I see it impossible to understand this secret. As for his advice we do thankfully accept it, and shall not harbour or foment one unreasonable, if they will be sure not to give in reasonable suspicions of their inclinations that way. And we do humbly intreat them to give us no more grounds for our jealousies than they needs must; for if they do, though we may be so modest as not to foment them in others, it will be difficult not to harbour them in our selves. For if whilst they cry out weare all undone for want of unity, they continue the impediments which obstruct it; and when they thunder against separation, they continue the cause of it: If they speak hard words against Popery, and give harder blows to Protestantcy both at home and abroad; or if whilst they give the Papists a gentle fillip, they reach dissenting Protestants a sound rap; if they will still proceed to represent all but themselves as silly in their Principles, seditious in their practises, and disloyal in their designs; we may perhaps perswade the people to say little, but they will pay it with thinking.

As I abhor cruelty towards all men upon the sole account of Religion, so shall I never plead for Indulgence to any, who discredit Religion with such practices.

practices, or mix it with such Principles as disturb Government, and destroy the ends of all society ; the Magistrate is the Peace-keeper, and is intrusted by God to suppress and punish the violaters of it. Nor do I fear what advantage the *Remonists* would get upon us by that *Connivence* which they enjoy, if their Temporal hopes from a worldly interest were less, and their fears of being brought to condign punishment for their Treasons were greater ; and they might have been past the hopes of the one, and the fear of the other, if some of our Clergy-men had not *unseasonably* (and some say *unreasonably*) insisted upon certain Imaginary priviledges to the obstructing of the Justice of the Nation. But if folly be such a catching disease the only antidote will be to teach 'em more *wisdom*. If *boldness in Religion*, give our enemies advantage, let not *prudent zeal* be discouraged. If contentions will do 'em such great service, remove their causes, by following the Rule, not as the Dr. has warp't it, but as the *Apostle* left it, to *walk by the Canon of the Word so far as we have attained* ; and if any man be otherwise minded, to leave him to Gods instruction, and wait till he shall reveal his mind farther unto him.

The CONCLUSION.

THUS have I at length rub'd through the *Reverend Authors Discourse* ; and upon a Calm Reflexion on my work, do not think I can displease any one more than my self: Such is the common fate of eager Disputants, that whilst they would reach a knock at their *Antagonists*, they lose their blow, and wound themselves : so easie it is, while we are scribbling, to forget that we are *dying* ; and that our *Sand* runs faster than our *Ink*: If the late change of *Ink horns*, into *Ink glasses*, had but taught us how *frail* and *brittle* we all are, it had been the most *innocent significant Ceremony* that ever was invented. I could wish there were a *General Auditors Office* erected, to take the Account, what all Disputes amount to, and it's probable the *Total* would be this, That the Contenders have lost more, than ever their Readers gained. Thus zealous Gamesters win and lose awhile, till at last the *Box* gets the stakes, and its well if the unconcerned by-standers come off *savers*: And yet when we condemn, and seem to bewail our wranglings, we go on, and wrangle still, like little children that scratch and bite, and cry together : But the Dissenters have one Plea, That in these *Piracies* they are not the *Aggressors*, but stand purely on their just Defence : If the *Winds* could be quiet, the *Waves* would not tumultuate ; but poor *Neptune* bears the blame of all the *Mutinies* in his Kingdom, when *Aeolus* only is guilty of the disorder. If their Opposers could hold their *hands*, the Dissenters would easily rule their *tongues* and *pens*, and would silently suffer silent persecution : That which goes to the quick, is this, That men cannot be content to shoot their *keen arrows*, except they poysen them with *bitter worts* ; like the Serpent that pierces with his teeth, and infuses his venom along with his biting. It is far more easie to pluck up the Flood-gates, than having once done it, to shut 'em down again. We have seen the beginning of a *Controversie*, which

which may perhaps outlive our Funerals, and the next age may lament those wounds which the present has got, but sleeps it out, and feels not. But if we ~~must~~, or ~~will~~ reciprocate this *Law of Contention*, what need to go down to the *Philistians* to sharpen the *Political Cutlass*, when we have *a file at home* will give it too much keenness. I owe the Reader and my self this debt of Justice, to profess, That I have not to my knowledg gratified any base lust in this my Answer; I have steered by the compass of Truth, and have not vered willingly from it, though perhaps I have not always made the point I aimed at. I must further profess, That I have those awful thoughts of the *Reverend Doctor*, whose Tract I pretend to Answer, to that he has equalled most, and excelled many of those Worthies, who have maintained the Protestant Cause against insulting *Rome*; but in this Cause he has gone below himself, and many others, which I do not impute to any want of Controversial skill, but the intrinsick weakness of the Cause he defended, and the real strength of that he oppugned; and seeing further than others in the true state of the Controversie, he discerned the feeblets of other mens Arguments; but yet through the iniquity of the matter, could find out none better of his own; And lastly, I must openly profess, after all I can hear, or read against the Cause of Nonconformity, I am more confirm'd, that all the wit of man can never prove the Dissenters in their way of worship guilty of the *Mischiefs of Separation*, nor justify the exactors of such terms of Communion as are *no way* commanded by the word of God, *no way* necessary to the executing of those Commands; but they must remain still guilty of the *Mischief of these Impostures*.

F I N I S.
